



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

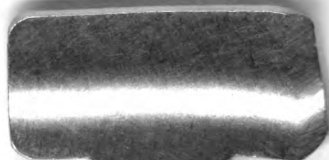
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

Zaragueta

Miguel Ramos
Carrión, Vital Aza



1



ZARAGUETA *or* **Money Talks**

Comedy in Two Acts

BY
MIGUEL RAMOS CARRION
and
VITAL AZA

Translated from the Spanish by
CLARENCE STRATTON



MADE IN U. S. A.

CHICAGO
T. S. DENISON & COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

COPYRIGHT, 1920

By

CLARENCE STRATTON



PK
6559
R 2
Z 312

ZARAGUETA

FOR SEVEN MEN AND FOUR WOMEN

CHARACTERS REPRESENTED

DON INDALECIO	<i>A Wealthy Farmer of the Province of Salamanca</i>
CARLOS.....	<i>His Nephew, a Student in Madrid</i>
DON SATURIO.....	<i>The Village Doctor</i>
HERMOGENES ZARAGUETA.....	<i>A Madrid Money-lender</i>
PIO.....	<i>Son of Dona Blasa, Ambitious to be a Priest</i>
PERICO.....	<i>A Servant</i>
AMBROSIO.....	<i>The Village Hack-driver</i>
DONA DOLORES.....	<i>Wife of Indalecio</i>
MARUJA.....	<i>Her Niece, Living with Her</i>
DONA BLASA.....	<i>Sister of the Village Priest</i>
GREGORIA	<i>Servant</i>

The action takes place at the present time, in the house of Indalecio.

TIME OF PLAYING—*About Two Hours.*

COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS.

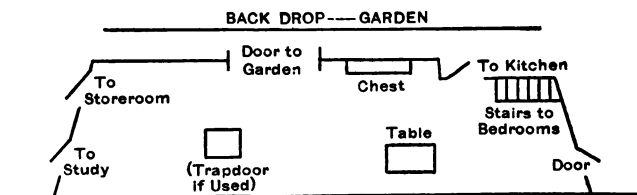
Zaragueta is an excellent farce-comedy particularly well suited for amateurs. It has been performed in several schools and colleges in the United States, always with success for the actors and delight for the audiences. In Spain it is one of the most popular stage plays. By costuming some of the characters in native Spanish garb a colorful note is added, but this is not absolutely necessary. Carlos is a well dressed city college student. *Zaragueta* is in the most fashionable clothes—patent leather shoes, light trousers, spats, cutaway coat, high silk hat. This makes all the more comic his treatment at the end of the play.

Carlos and Maruja are cousins, orphans, and dependent upon their aunt and uncle.

Indalecio, Perico, Ambrosio, and all the women are dressed in the characteristic costumes of the provinces of Salamanca.

Care should be exercised in making the names sound like Spanish names. This can be accomplished if the following pronunciations are regarded: In-dal-e'-thio, Thar-a-gu-e'-ta, Per-i'-co, Don'-ya, Mar-u'-ha, Gregor'-ia. These sounds will guide in pronouncing the few Spanish names in the lines.

SCENE PLOT.



ZARAGUETA

THE FIRST ACT.

The stage shows the living room of a well-to-do villager containing neat and suitable furniture. In the rear wall, to the left of the audience, a large doorway leads to the brilliantly colored garden. In the middle of this wall is a window. To the right of this a door leads to the kitchen. In the left wall, close to the front is a door into the study and rooms of INDALECIO. Just beyond it is the heavy door to the store-room. Above this door is a transom. On the other side of the room a door leads out by way of the back garden. Just beyond this the stairway from the second floor comes down into the room, showing a portion of the railing and three or four steps. A trap-door in the floor to the left leads down into the cellar. Between the two doors in the right wall stands a cupboard. Under the window at the rear is a large chest. A table stands near the front towards the right. In the center of the stage is a large well worn leather arm-chair. Six other covered chairs are in the room.

When the curtain rises the stage is empty. The village church bell can be heard ringing. GREGORIA comes from the kitchen, crosses the room, and lifts the trap door.

GREGORIA (*leaning over the opening*). Perico——
Perico.

PERICO (*below; rather indistinctly*). What do you want?

GREGORIA. When you finish sweeping the cellar bring me a bottle of vinegar.

PERICO. Which kind?

GREGORIA. The barrel under the window.

PERICO. All right.

GREGORIA *returns toward the kitchen.* DOLORES *comes from the study, carrying sheets, pillowcases, and crocheted spread.*

DOLORES. Come here. Here are the bedclothes for this bed. (*She puts them on the table and examines them carefully.*) Gracious! How yellow this fringe is. That's just the way when the fine things are used only for guests.

GREGORIA. I bet that young fellow never had a bed in Madrid like the one we're getting ready for him here.

DOLORES. What could a poor boy expect in a boarding house?

GREGORIA. Two new feather beds as light as foam! He'll sleep sound tonight.

DOLORES. I hope he will. But he won't. The poor boy is coming home so sick.

GREGORIA. Is it true he's so sick?

DOLORES. Very ill, very ill. But fortunately here with his aunt and his uncle he will soon recover. God made my hands skillful in nursing the sick. I really enjoy such work, too. No, not enjoy, because—

GREGORIA. I should say so. You know a lot more about curing people than Doctor Saturio.

DOLORES. No, my girl, not that much. But the truth is that there is in all the village no one who can surpass me when it comes to brewing potions to perfection. I can put on a mustard plaster as well as anybody; and no one can beat me at massaging.

PERICO comes up from the cellar with a bottle. He drops the door with a slam. DOLORES, who has her back to him, jumps.

DOLORES. Oh!

PERICO. Don't be frightened. It's only me.

DOLORES (*aside*). Clumsy brute!

PERICO (*to GREGORIA*). Here's your vinegar.

GREGORIA. Put it in the kitchen.

PERICO. All right. (*He starts off.*)

GREGORIA. Oh! (*He turns back.*)

PERICO. What?

GREGORIA. Wouldn't you like to carry in a good load of wood for me? I haven't any left except a few splinters.

PERICO. Sure, I'll get it in the storeroom right away.

PERICO goes to the kitchen with the vinegar. When he returns he is carrying a large basket. In a minute he emerges from the storeroom carrying a basket load of wood upon his shoulder. He enters the kitchen. A little later he returns to the room, and goes out into the garden.

DOLORES (*to MARUJA, who comes down the stairs singing, and who goes over to the chest at the rear*). But, my dear child! For mercy's sake. How can you want to sing at a time like this?

MARUJA (*affectionately*). Oh, to be sure. I forgot. Pardon me, aunt.

DOLORES. It's a great good fortune to have a disposition as bright as yours. (*To GREGORIA.*) Take these pillow cases and all the rest to the bedroom upstairs.

GREGORIA *goes up the stairs, and later returns and goes into the kitchen.*

MARUJA (*measuring wheat from the chest into a little basket*). One—two—three—and four. (*She closes the chest.*)

DOLORES. What are you at? Going to feed your chickens?

MARUJA. Yes, aunt.

DOLORES. Are you going to give them a bushel as you generally do?

MARUJA. A bushel! Why, Aunt, you know I never give them more than four cups.

DOLORES. Exactly. Four now, four more at noon, and four more in the morning. They must be fat enough to burst now.

MARUJA. They are. Especially two hens—one feather-legged and a top-knot. They are like two turkeys. They're so fine!

DOLORES. They will make fine stew.

MARUJA. Why, are you going to kill them?

DOLORES. Naturally. Now that your cousin is so ill, he will need thick nutritive broth.

MARUJA. You're right. Well, for Carlos, I'll sacrifice the top-knot and even feather-legs. I must go feed them. They are expecting me.

DOLORES. You're lucky not to have to worry over anything except your two-legged pets.

MARUJA. What else should I do? In this town there are so few attractive two-legged creatures that I have to content myself with those in the barnyard. Bye-bye. (*She goes into the kitchen.*)

DOLORES. What a happy child. It hardly seems possible that she was raised in a convent. She's always so light-hearted. (*The chickens begin to cackle.*)

She's stirring up the chicken yard already. (DOLORES looks out the window.) How they pick, and flutter about; how they cram down the wheat.—Listen, Maruja. That one going over to the watering trough ought to be killed. Push that duck away—she won't let the little chicks get anything to eat.

The last clang of the distant church bell is heard. PERICO comes from the kitchen, crosses the room, and goes out into the garden. INDALECIO comes from the study carrying a newspaper.

INDALECIO. What's all this? Aren't you people going to Church? That's the last bell.

DOLORES. No. We are not going this afternoon. I want to go to the station with you to meet Carlos.

INDALECIO. Just as you please. Ambrosio will bring his carriage in time to take us. I've sent word by Perico.

DOLORES. But, husband, is it possible that you don't want to walk even a quarter of a mile when that is exactly what you need? You know what Doctor Saturio is always advising you. Exercise—lots of exercise. And you take none. You're always just sitting around the house.

INDALECIO. All right, wife, I'll take some exercise. We'll walk.

DOLORES. Ambrosio can go to the station to fetch us home. Carlos won't want to take a long walk. You and I can go leisurely over the hill and by the short cut. That will be enough of a walk for us.

INDALECIO. The short cut! It makes me sweat only to think of it. Well, have it your own way; we'll go by the short cut.

DOLORES. You'll see how much better it will make you feel.

INDALECIO. Very well, then. But see here. Let's take some rolls or buttered buns along with us so we can stop and eat at the Bishop's Fountain.

DOLORES. What? Aren't you going to take any chocolate this afternoon?

INDALECIO. Why, of course. But this won't interfere with that. That lunch will be later. I'll take the chocolate now. Tell them to get it ready. (*He sits in the armchair.*)

DOLORES. There's no hurry. The train's been more than an hour late every day for a long time.

INDALECIO. It will be on time today for I just read in the Chronicle that the bridge at Valdeterrones has been repaired.

DOLORES. In that case I'd better hurry Gregoria up. (*She goes to the kitchen door.*) Gregoria, make the chocolate right away, and bring it in.

GREGORIA (*from the kitchen*). Directly.

INDALECIO. Say, wife, what's become of that spice-cake that we got from the nuns of Salamanca?

DOLORES. Why, you gobbled it all up in two days!

INDALECIO. I suppose I did. What a pity! Some cakes are good enough to last forever.

DOLORES. I hope Heaven preserves that good appetite of yours.

INDALECIO. Amen to that. When this machine quits working, then goodbye, Indalecio.

PERICO *comes in from the garden with a force pump and a garden hose.*

PERICO. Oh, Senor Indalecio!

INDALECIO. What do you want?

PERICO. Here's the pump. The blacksmith has fixed it as good as new.

INDALECIO. Have you tried it yet?

PERICO. Yes, down at the blacksmith shop, and it threw a stream as far as the horse doctor's house. The pressure is fine.

DOLORES. How much did he charge?

PERICO. He said he'd come collect it.

DOLORES. All right, all right. First of all, go and water that bed of lettuce. It certainly needs it.

PERICO. Directly. (*He goes into the garden.*)

DOLORES. That miserable pump has already cost us a small fortune.

PERICO (*in the garden*). Yes, sir; step right in.

INDALECIO. Who is it?

PERICO. The doctor. (*He disappears.*)

DOCTOR SATURIO *enters*.

DOLORES. Why, Doctor Saturio.

SATURIO. Good afternoon.

INDALECIO. How are you?

SATURIO. They just told me at home that you want to see me. Has anything happened?

DOLORES. Yes, Doctor.

SATURIO (*to INDALECIO*). Another of your spells of indigestion, I suppose. I'm always telling you you eat too much.

INDALECIO. I eat just what I need, and I digest it very well.

DOLORES. No, he's not sick.

SATURIO. Maruja, then?

DOLORES. No, my nephew.

SATURIO. Which nephew?

DOLORES. Carlos, who is studying in Madrid.

SATURIO. When did he arrive? I didn't know he was home.

DOLORES. He's not here yet. He comes in this afternoon on the mail train. But before he arrives we want to talk to you.

SATURIO. Very well then.

DOLORES. You'll take a cup of chocolate with us, won't you?

SATURIO. Yes, indeed, with much pleasure. It just happens today that I can't go home for it as I have to go this afternoon to Villarejo.

INDALECIO. Take this chair, Doctor.

DOLORES *goes to the kitchen and returns immediately.*

SATURIO. Let's hear what's the matter with the lad. *(They draw their chairs up to the table.)*

INDALECIO. You'll see. Yesterday we received from him this letter which gave us a great surprise.

DOLORES *(sitting)*. We're so worried.

INDALECIO. Greatly worried.

SATURIO. Let me hear it.

INDALECIO *(reading)*. "Madrid, September 5. My very lovable and never to be forgotten Aunt and Uncle.

DOLORES *(moved)*. He is so affectionate!

INDALECIO. "Never to be forgotten Aunt and Uncle. My long silence which has surprised you so much has not been due, as you might suppose, to a lack of affection, nor to forgetfulness, nor ingratitude."

DOLORES. He loves us so!

INDALECIO. "In order not to alarm you needlessly I haven't said a word about the bad condition of my health."

DOLORES. Poor boy!

INDALECIO. "But in view of the fact that my illness has become serious I believe I ought to write to you about it frankly."

SATURIO. That's serious!

DOLORES. He must be very sick.

SATURIO. Go on, Don Indalecio.

INDALECIO. "I have consulted the most eminent physicians of Madrid, and they all agree that I am suffering from a complication of the stomach, the liver, and the kidneys."

SATURIO. Bless my soul and body!

INDALECIO. It looks as if he's in pretty bad shape.

SATURIO. There is no cause for worry, there is no cause for worry—yet. Proceed.

GREGORIA *comes from the kitchen with a tray bearing three cups of chocolate and three plates of biscuits, which she serves. A minute later she returns from the kitchen with three cups of water which she also serves.*

INDALECIO. "The sacrifices you have made in order that I may pursue my career, the immense favors I owe to you, the truly parental affection with which you have treated me, have made me pause before revealing to you this trouble." You read, Dolores, my chocolate is getting cold.

DOLORES. Give it to me. Where did you stop?

INDALECIO. At trouble. (*At this point GREGORIA serves the water.*)

DOLORES. Yes, here's the place. "But circumstances force me, and I must speak to you with perfect frankness. According to the opinion of all the doctors who have examined me, it will be impossible for me to be cured in Madrid."

SATURIO. That's perfectly clear. Let him come to the country. What he needs is fresh air, the pure atmosphere of the country.

DOLORES. No, Doctor, it's not that. You'll see. "They all declare that I must go without any delay to

Paris, the only place where they can perform the operation I need."

SATURIO. Operation? I don't understand.

DOLORES. But that's what it says.

SATURIO. And then what?

DOLORES. He explains that he hopes we can stand this extra expense, and that he's coming today to begin his journey from here.

SATURIO. From the data he gives it is not easy to form a diagnosis. We shall examine him, and then—Who can say? Perhaps there will be no need of his going to France. This fad of believing that doctors in foreign countries can cure everything makes me boil. Just as though we Spanish doctors are no more than a pack of ignoramuses!—No, sir. Without going abroad, you have in me, humble village physician that I am, a practitioner who employs every new device of medical science. I'm not an old fogey. When a new system appears, I study it. Is it good? Then I use it. I'm as much a devotee of progress as anybody, and so in my practice I employ hydrotherapy, electrotherapy, and aerotherapy.

INDALECIO. All the—therapies.

SATURIO. Hydrotherapy above all; and principally cold shower baths, frequently repeated, have always produced for me excellent results.

When INDALECIO has eaten all his biscuits he changes plates with DOLORES while she is reading and so eats all hers.

DOLORES. Well! Gregoria didn't give me any biscuits.

SATURIO. Here are some; help yourself.

DOLORES. Thank you, I'm not hungry. I'll sip my chocolate.

SATURIO. If you will excuse me I must hurry on to make my calls so I can get to Villarejo before night-fall. In any case I shall come back here to see your nephew, if only for a moment. (*He rises.*)

INDALECIO. My good friend, I wonder if you will do me a favor. In Villarejo you'll probably see old man Celedonio.

SATURIO. Certainly, I'll make it a point to see him.

INDALECIO. Ask him to send me by you the four thousand pesetas he received from the sale of the wheat.

SATURIO. I'll do that errand with a great deal of pleasure.

INDALECIO. I hope it won't be too much trouble. . .

SATURIO. Don't think such a thing. I'll not fail you. . .

MARUJA (*coming from the kitchen to replace the basket in the chest*). Good afternoon, Doctor Saturio.

SATURIO. Hello, Maruja. How this little girl has improved!

GREGORIA *comes in from the kitchen, gathers up the chocolate service, and returns to the kitchen.*

MARUJA. Well, I'm not ill, thank heaven!

SATURIO. Ill? Why what an idea. You're as fresh as a rosebud. Well, I'm off.

DOLORES. Now don't fail to come back.

SATURIO. I'll be here; I'll be here.

INDALECIO. Until we see you, then.

DOLORES. Goodbye, Doctor Saturio.

MARUJA. Au revoir. (*SATURIO disappears through the garden.*)

DOLORES. Come, Indalecio; let's go to the station; it's nearly time. (*To MARUJA.*) Fetch my mantilla.

(MARUJA goes into the study and returns with the mantilla.) You always walk so slowly.

INDALECIO. Let's go, wife, whenever you say so. Oh! You are forgetting the buns.

DOLORES. Is it possible!

INDALECIO. Yes; it's quite possible that within a short time I shall feel weak. It's this powerful digestion the Lord has given me. I'm certain that before I reach Bishop's Fountain I'll feel hollow to my heels. (He goes into the study for his hat. MARUJA helps her aunt to adjust her mantilla. DOLORES goes to the breadbox, opens it, and takes out the buns, which she wraps in the newspaper left by INDALECIO in the armchair.)

DOLORES (to MARUJA). You can go to the room upstairs, make the bed and put everything in order. Carlos will be worn out by his trip, and he ought to go to bed the moment he arrives.

INDALECIO returns, putting on his hat.

MARUJA. Goodbye.

INDALECIO. We're off, Maruja. (MARUJA goes upstairs.)

DOLORES. Come, come, husband. You'll never get started. (She hands him the buns.)

INDALECIO. I'm coming.

BLASA (in the garden). Well, we don't know anything about it.

INDALECIO. Who's that?

DOLORES. Dona Blasa and her son. Come in, Dona Blasa.

BLASA and Pio come into the room.

BLASA. Good afternoon. Don't stay at home on our account. We wouldn't put you out for worlds. We didn't see you at church, and so we came to see if

anything had happened. But your servant just told us all about poor Carlos, and that you are going to the station to meet him.

DOLORES. Yes, we were just going. (INDALECIO starts to munch the buns.)

BLASA. Then you must go right on. But his illness won't amount to anything. You remember the scare this boy gave us all two years ago when he was in the seminary? We thought he would surely die. He no sooner got home where I could take care of him, and with some gentian extract, syrup of snails, and poultices of white wine on his stomach, I turned him out as good as new. Just look at him now, healthy and fat.

DOLORES. Yes, yes. . . Then if you will excuse us, Dona Blasa. . .

BLASA. Yes, yes; go ahead. Don't stand on ceremony with us. Maruja will entertain us, where is she?

DOLORES. Upstairs. Call her, Indalecio.

INDALECIO (*with his mouth full*). Hum! (*He swallows.*) I thought I was going to choke.

BLASA. Never mind. She must be busy. We'll wait for her.

DOLORES. We'll see you again. Give my regards to the priest.

BLASA. Thank you. Goodbye.

INDALECIO (*aside*). After this delay we won't have time to stop for lunch at Bishop's Fountain. (DOLORES and INDALECIO go out.)

BLASA. What a fool you are, my son. You make my blood boil. No one can drag a word out of your body. (*Pio tries to speak.*) I know what you're going to say—you can't help it; it's your nature. But it must not be like that. Acting like that will never

get you anywhere. I can't imagine what they taught you in the Seminary that you're so timid. (Pio *tries to speak*.) Don't contradict me. In order to live in this world you can't afford to be so retiring. And you must live in the world. You ought to be quite convinced by now that an ecclesiastical career is not for you. The example of your uncle, my poor brother, should be sufficient for that. You must know that if I were not a very economical woman, and he a man of very few needs, I don't know how we could get along. The position of priest pays nothing, and I don't suppose that you wish to leave the Seminary to become enrolled merely as a canon. (Pio *tries to speak*.) Not a word. Your idea of a divine call is nonsense. You must think of the future. Your uncle, who is our only support, is very old, he could die in less time than it takes to imagine it. Just imagine that he is dying, that he is dead. What are we to do then? That's what I want you to think about; at twenty-two you ought to think of a great many things—you ought to create a future for yourself, marry a girl with some means. Who is more suitable than Maruja? She's a charming little creature, well educated and virtuous, and her Uncle Indalecio is the highest man in town. He has no heirs except this girl and her cousin. And now we hear that he is coming home very sick from Madrid. It is quite probable that he will die. Just imagine that he is dying; imagine that he is dead. There will be no heir except Maruja. You marry her and live here with your Aunt Dolores and your Uncle Indalecio, happy and prosperous. You see how Don Indalecio is; he's as round as a ball. With the life he leads and the way he eats, some fine day he'll burst. Just imagine that he is bursting; that he has burst.

Then your wife will be owner of all this fortune; then peace and glory. Don't deceive yourself, Pio; in this house is your divine calling, Pio.

MARUJA *comes down the stairs.*

MARUJA. Oh! are you here? I didn't know it.

BLASA. Hello, Maruja. Your aunt and uncle told us you were busy upstairs, so I didn't want them to call you.

MARUJA. Yes; I've been fixing up the room for my poor cousin.

BLASA. Always so good and so handy! You are a jewel!

MARUJA. You flatter me.

BLASA. No, my dear, no; it's true. It's exactly what I was saying to Pio when you came down. Maruja will make some man very happy, you'll be lucky if you find a woman anywhere nearly her equal.

MARUJA. Dona Blasa, for goodness sake. I think I'm too young to be a priest's housekeeper.

BLASA. Housekeeper? It's not a question of that. Evidently you didn't know that Pio has already given up the priesthood.

MARUJA. Really?

BLASA. Just as I'm telling you. He is resolved not to go back to the Seminary.

MARUJA. What's this you're telling me?

BLASA. He no longer wants to be a curate. He has disappointed me in that (*Pio fans himself with his hat*), but I am not disposed to force his inclinations.

MARUJA. Good for Pio!

BLASA. It doesn't strike me that way. But what best shows how complete this change is, is the fact that this fellow is in love. (*Pio still fanning.*)

MARUJA. And with whom?

BLASA. I don't know. You know how reserved he is; I can't drag a word out of him. (*Aside to her.*) See if you can worm it out of him. Well, Maruja, I must be going. It's getting late.

Pio. Yes; let's go; let's go.

BLASA. Why, my son, not you. You stay here and wait for Carlos. You've been friends from childhood. (*To him.*) Don't be so stupid. This is your best chance. Make use of it. Goodbye, my dear.

MARUJA. Goodbye, Dona Blasa. (*She starts to accompany her to the door.*)

BLASA. Oh, don't bother. Goodbye, my dear girl, for a little while. Good luck to you. (*She leaves through the garden.*)

Pio (*aside*). Oh! Holy Saints! What agonies my mother makes me suffer. She won't allow herself to be convinced that I was born to be a priest, and nothing but a priest.

MARUJA. It's all right, Senor Don Pio, it's all right. So this is the state of affairs! Who would have suspected it?

Pio. Why, I'm not.

MARUJA. Now, don't pretend with me. Those who always keep their eyes cast down upon the ground are the worst ones. When your mother declares to me that you are in love, she must be right. If not, why are you giving up your career?

Pio. Why, I'm not.

MARUJA. Come, come; don't be backward with me. I am dying with curiosity to know who the object of your affections is.

Pio. But I don't—

MARUJA. I have it! It must be Manolita, the drug-gist's niece.

PIO. Saints above!

MARUJA. No? Then it is Nicanora.

PIO. Ave Maria!

MARUJA. No? I won't miss it this time. You are in love with Soledad.

PIO. Oh, Virgin Mother!

MARUJA. But, Pio, I have named the only marriageable girls in the village. I don't remember any others. That's to say—(*aside*). There is another. Myself! Could it be possible that this fellow is in love with me? Listen, Pio. Do you recall any other?

PIO. I? Oh, no.

MARUJA (*aside*). He's so timid. Perhaps he's afraid to speak out. He isn't so bad looking, to tell the truth. At least he wouldn't be if he dressed differently and had a mustache. Say, Pio, why don't you grow a mustache?

PIO. A mustache! Preposterous!

MARUJA. I don't see why. If you're not going to be a priest.

PIO. Listen, Maruja. I want to speak the truth to you.

MARUJA. Go on; go on! (*Aside.*) He is going to propose!

PIO. You'll be good enough to pardon me for it, won't you?

MARUJA. Yes, indeed! Consider yourself pardoned.

PIO. Well, then, my mother is—I don't know how to tell you. Naturally, the respect—But I can't help it—My inclination.

MARUJA. Don't talk to me about wrenching your inclinations. If your vocation calls you in any direction, follow it.

PIO. That's it! You understand me!

MARUJA (*aside*). How his face lights up. He's like another person. What else?

PIO. I have made up my mind.

MARUJA. You are right. When your desires are good and right they should not be opposed.

PIO. That's what I say.

(*The sound of tinkling bells is heard outside.*)

MARUJA. You are resolved upon it? Then no hesitation or doubts. Arrange the matter as quickly as possible and then to the altar.

PIO. That's it; the altar! I can see myself there in my vestments, saying to my faithful congregation, Pax vobiscum!

MARUJA (*aside*). Merciful heavens! Now it turns out that what he wants is to sing mass! I should have made a fine show of myself if I had gone just a little bit further!

PERICO *comes running in from the garden.* GREGORIA *dashes out of the kitchen.* A little later CARLOS and AMBROSIO *appear in the doorway, the latter carrying a valise and a traveling rug.*

PERICO. Senorita!

GREGORIA. Senorita!

MARUJA. What's the matter?

PERICO. Ambrosio's hack has stopped at the gate.

GREGORIA (*at the door*). A young man is getting out. It must be your cousin.

MARUJA. Let me see! (*Going to the door.*) Yes! There he is. And aunt and uncle have gone to meet him by the short cut. Run, see if you can overtake them and bring them back.

PERICO. I'll go get my coat. (*He dashes into the kitchen and soon rushes out again.*)

GREGORIA (*to Pio*). Poor fellow! How pale he is.

CARLOS and AMBROSIO enter.

MARUJA. Carlos!

CARLOS. Maruja! (*They greet each other. As they reach the center of the room, CARLOS faints and droops against MARUJA's shoulder.*)

MARUJA. He's fainted! Help me. (*Pio and GREGORIA help her to support him.*)

PIO. Poor Carlos!

MARUJA. Put him here. (*They help him to the arm chair in the middle of the room.*) Come, my fine fellow, cheer up. You're at home now.

PIO. Yes; cheer up, cheer up.

GREGORIA. At least, you'll have the pleasure of dying at home.

CARLOS (*aside*). Blockhead!

PERICO. My, how sick he is!

MARUJA. Come, my man, hurry as fast as you can. (*PERICO dashes out.*)

AMBROSIO (*coming forward with the valise and rug*). Where shall I put these?

MARUJA. Gregoria, take them upstairs.

GREGORIA *takes them and goes upstairs, coming down shortly to go into the kitchen.*

CARLOS. Pay this man. I haven't strength—enough—to get—the money.

MARUJA. All right, Ambrosio; we'll pay you later.

AMBROSIO. Just as you say, Senorita. Good day. (*He approaches CARLOS and yells in his ear.*) I hope you get better.

CARLOS. Ah! Thanks. (*AMBROSIO goes out through the garden and in a moment the tinkling bells of his hack can be heard as he drives away.*) Ah, Pio! Ah, Maruja! I'm so sick.

MARUJA. Come now, don't overtax yourself.

PIO. The first thing you need is rest. And since I've had the pleasure of seeing you so well—I mean so ill—now I shall go to the church and pray to Saint Anthony to grant you whatever you desire.

CARLOS. Yes, ask him to give me what I need. Pray with all your soul.

PIO. Have a good rest. Goodbye, Maruja.

MARUJA. Goodbye, Pio. (*She accompanies Pio to the door where they exchange signs to show how ill they consider CARLOS. Pio disappears.*)

CARLOS. Oh, my!

MARUJA. Do you want something? Do you need anything?

CARLOS (*exhausted*). Aunt and uncle? Where are they?

MARUJA. They went to the station by the short cut.

CARLOS. They're not in the house?

MARUJA. No. I'm here alone.

CARLOS. Alone?

MARUJA. Yes.

CARLOS. Close that door. (*She closes one.*) Close that other one. (*She crosses the room to close it.*) Close all the doors. (*She closes the kitchen door.*)

MARUJA. How afraid you are of drafts.

CARLOS. Yes. Especially those in my name.

MARUJA (*aside*). He must be delirious. What are you afraid of?

CARLOS. There's no one about?

MARUJA. No one.

CARLOS (*getting up*). Then listen, Maruja.

MARUJA. Oh, dear me!

CARLOS. Keep calm now. You've always loved me as a brother, haven't you?

MARUJA. Yes—and I still do.

CARLOS. I'm sure of that. You are good, charming, and above all, very discreet.

MARUJA. Yes, but—

CARLOS. I need your support.

MARUJA. Lean on me. (*She offers her arm.*)

CARLOS. Not that kind. Your moral support.

MARUJA. What?

CARLOS. Maruja, dear Maruja, my dear cousin, if I tell you a very serious secret, will you keep it?

MARUJA. Yes, indeed, I shall.

CARLOS. You are the only person in whom I can confide. I need some one to help me. My situation—you must believe, me, Maruja, is very serious.

MARUJA. Oh, no, Carlos. You are not so sick as that.

CARLOS. Certainly not. I'm not sick at all.

MARUJA. What?

CARLOS. I have bomb proof health.

MARUJA (*astounded*). What are you saying?

CARLOS. That's the secret.

MARUJA. Eh?

CARLOS. That's the secret.

MARUJA. I am overwhelmed. Then you're all right?

CARLOS. Quite well, thank you. How are you?

MARUJA. I can't understand. For heaven's sake, explain yourself at once, before I go crazy.

CARLOS. I'll be brief, because I want you to know before aunt and uncle get back. (*MARUJA goes to look out; then returns.*)

MARUJA. Now tell me.

CARLOS. Here's the list I made out on the train, which represents the synopsis of all my misfortunes.

(*He takes a paper from his pocket and reads.*) "To the landlady—"

MARUJA. To whom?

CARLOS. To the landlady, four months' board at 80 pesetas, 320. To the shoemaker, slippers, shoes and pumps, 100. To the tailor, two suits and a two spot—"

MARUJA. What's that?

CARLOS. Coat and trousers, 560. To the waiter at the Oriental Cafe, chocolates and tips, 85. To the night watchman, three months' fees and four pesetas he loaned me one night, 10. To Don Hermogenes Zaragueta—and this is the largest item—for two promissory notes with interest, 3,000. Grand total—prepare yourself—4,075 pesetas." This is what I owe in Madrid.

MARUJA. Mercy, mercy, mercy! But how is it you owe all this?

CARLOS. Because I haven't paid it.

MARUJA. And aunt and uncle know nothing about it!

CARLOS. What's more, I don't want them to know. Do you suppose that if I had written to them saying that I am sound and healthy but that I owe 4,000 pesetas, they would have sent it to me?

MARUJA. Certainly not.

CARLOS. I must get it at any cost. For two months I've hardly been able to go out of the house. All my creditors were lying in wait for me. One night the concierge refused to open the door for me and I had to sleep in the Plaza de Oriente between the statues of King Recaredo and Chindasvinto.

MARUJA. Poor Carlos!

CARLOS. Can you guess what it is to live in a boarding house when you owe the landlady four months' board? It's a terrible agony. When you waken up,

"Here's your chocolate!" (*With exaggerated harshness.*) At lunch, "Here are your fried eggs!" At dinner, "Here's your soup!" And so it went from day to day until I said to myself, "You've either got to jump off the Viaduct or deceive your aunt and uncle." There was no other way out.

MARUJA. And you—

CARLOS. I chose the second plan. Do you think I'd kill myself for such a thing as that?

MARUJA. I should say not.

CARLOS. I've done enough already. I've gotten terribly sick. It was the only thing I could do. I admit it's not very noble, but necessity compelled me to do it. My aunt and uncle are good, they're soft-hearted, and they think a great deal of me.

MARUJA. They are. You owe everything to them.

CARLOS. Yes, everything. That's why I want to owe them 4,000 pesetas more. You understand that a trip to Paris and a surgical operation couldn't cost less than that.

MARUJA. But if you aren't sick, why should you go to Paris?

CARLOS. Don't talk nonsense. If I get that money I'll go straight to Madrid. Then I would religiously pay all of my creditors so I could walk through the streets fearing no one, holding my head high in the air. I'd give the landlady a piece of my mind! And I'd make a few remarks to that night watchman! And what a jolt I'd give Zaragueta!

MARUJA. And then you'd start in again at the same thing and—

CARLOS. Don't say that. I have truly repented. These two months of enforced captivity in the boarding house taught me a lesson. I have decided to study, to

pursue my career, and show myself worthy of the sacrifices of my aunt and uncle.

MARUJA. That's a good resolution. But you must admit that it is unpardonable for you to come here to play such a farce as this.

CARLOS. It's not a farce; it's a last resource. It came to me from reading the lives of the Popes.

MARUJA. What?

CARLOS. You've never heard the story of Sixtus V.?

MARUJA. No.

CARLOS. He pretended to be so infirm, debilitated and decrepit that even his opponents voted for him in the papal election, believing that he would live for only a short time. When he was elected he threw aside the staff he had leaned upon, stood erect and looking at his enemies said, "I am strong and hearty. Now, you'll have a Pope for some time."

MARUJA. But is this true?

CARLOS. Absolute history. Now if an entire Conclave can be deceived in this manner, and by so great a man as a Pope, what's the harm if a couple of people are treated in the same way by a poor student loaded with debts and obligations? I repeat that I am destitute. The landlady, the tailor, even the concierge may wait, but Don Hermogenes—

MARUJA. Who is Don Hermogenes?

CARLOS. Zaragueta. He won't wait for anybody. He found out that aunt and uncle live here, that they are rich, so he threatened to write to them demanding what I owe before appealing to the courts. He's a regular bandit.

MARUJA. He surely wouldn't do that!

CARLOS. You don't know Zaragueta. He's a suave, courteous old fellow, but with all his smoothness and

politeness he'd send you to jail for that. (*He snaps his fingers.*) It's useless to go to him with excuses. He appears to be deaf to all of them; that is, he doesn't appear to be, for he really is deaf.

MARUJA. He is deaf?

CARLOS. Totally. But you can be sure that when aunt and uncle give me the money he'll hear the things I'll say to him.

MARUJA. Mercy, no!

CARLOS. You see I can't wait until he writes to them and tells them everything.

MARUJA. You're right. Perhaps I can help you with my savings.

CARLOS. How?

MARUJA. I've a savings bank with 750 pesetas and a few coppers.

CARLOS. Seven hundred and fifty pesetas and some coppers. I'll take the seven hundred and fifty—but not the coppers. I don't like to abuse your generosity.

MARUJA. Don't mention it.

CARLOS. The most important thing is that my aunt and uncle be convinced that I must take the trip to Paris, so they will give me enough money to pay that infamous money lender. If they hesitate, I want you to help convince them. Tell them I'm very sick, that they must send me to France immediately.

MARUJA. Well—but I—well, I'll do it if you promise me that you'll change your conduct entirely—

CARLOS. Of course I'll promise. I'll swear to you. But now, for the sake of humanity, give me something to eat. I'm faint from hunger. I haven't eaten a bite for sixteen hours.

MARUJA. You haven't?

CARLOS. I've eaten nothing except a few chocolates

that I bought in Villalba. I had so little money I couldn't pay for food anywhere.

MARUJA. Poor fellow!

CARLOS. I'm as hungry as a wolf.

MARUJA. I'll have something for you in a second.

INDALECIO and DOLORES. (*In the garden.*) Where is he? Where is he?

MARUJA. Aunt and uncle!

CARLOS. Back to the chair! Don't desert me! (*He sinks down exhausted in the arm chair.*)

INDALECIO and DOLORES rush in.

INDALECIO. Carlos!

DOLORES. Carlos, dear boy! (*They embrace him.*)

CARLOS. Uncle, aunt.

INDALECIO. At last you're home again.

DOLORES. How anxious we were to see you!

INDALECIO (*behind CARLOS, to DOLORES*). How sick he looks. We must cheer him up. You're looking fine!

DOLORES. No one would say that you are sick.

CARLOS. But I'm very ill.

INDALECIO. Come, come. It's nothing.

DOLORES. You'll soon get better here.

CARLOS. No, aunt; not here. I must go to Paris.

INDALECIO. Paris? What nonsense is this?

CARLOS. Yes, uncle, yes. It's serious. Maruja will vouch for it. Just as I arrived I had a fainting spell. Isn't that so?

MARUJA. Yes—he fainted.

CARLOS. I faint frequently.

DOLORES. Yes; but that will all pass away.

INDALECIO. Here, with plenty of rest and good chops and good wine.

CARLOS. That sounds good to me.

DOLORS. You will have to be extremely careful with your eating. In the condition you are—

INDALECIO. Good food never hurts anybody. Let me feel your pulse. (*He does so.*) I really don't know anything about this, but it seems pretty weak to me.

CARLOS. Yes, very weak

INDALECIO (*to MARUJA*). Order a good meal at once.

DOLORS. But, husband!

INDALECIO. Soup with eggs, pork chops with tomatoes, and roast chicken.

CARLOS. Yes; that's what I need.

INDALECIO. See that. (*To DOLORS.*) Just to hear it makes him feel better.

DOLORS. Indalecio, for heaven's sake!

MARUJA. Uncle is right. That certainly will not hurt him.

CARLOS. I'm sure of it.

DOLORS. Are you hungry?

CARLOS. Extremely! But—to tell the truth—I don't know whether it's hunger, or illness, or faintness—

INDALECIO. Weakness, weakness, weakness! Half the sick people die of it. Hurry with that meal.

MARUJA. Right away. (*She goes to the kitchen.*)

CARLOS (*with a deep sigh*). Oh!

INDALECIO. What is it? (*Drawing near with a chair.*)

DOLORS. Do you feel worse? (*Seating herself on the other side.*)

CARLOS. You must not deceive yourselves. I am very sick. I shall die if I don't go to Paris tomorrow.

INDALECIO. Well, we'll see about that. (*He sits down.*) When did you begin to feel sick? For more than a week now we've had no word from you.

CARLOS. That was so you would not be alarmed. But this began—oh!—at about Carnival time.

DOLORES. So long ago as that?

CARLOS. Yes. And during Lent I grew worse.

INDALECIO. Why, of course. Those slim Lenten meals. Spinach without meat is always a poison.

CARLOS. At first I began to notice slight disturbances. At times I felt hot—at others, cold—at others neither hot nor cold.

DOLORES. And then what?

CARLOS. Then pains all over.

INDALECIO. Pains?

DOLORES. Where?

INDALECIO. Sharp pains?

CARLOS. Extremely sharp. First they attacked me in one place—then in another—but principally here, on both sides. (*He puts his hands in his pockets.*)

INDALECIO. Empty feeling?

CARLOS. Completely empty.

INDALECIO. Bless my soul and body, my boy! And here we didn't know a thing about it.

DOLORES. You suffering that way!

CARLOS. Continually. For two months I haven't been able to leave the boarding house.

INDALECIO. Two months!

CARLOS. Yes, uncle. It got so bad I didn't dare walk along the streets.

INDALECIO. How awful!

CARLOS. And one night when I ventured out I had to sleep on a bench in the Plaza de Oriente.

DOLORES. Heavens!

INDALECIO. Awful! Did you suffer an attack?

CARLOS. No; nobody struck me.

INDALECIO. What?

CARLOS. I said that—(*groaning*). Oh!

DOLORES. What's the matter?

INDALECIO. What is it?

CARLOS. These pains—they never leave me.

DOLORES. Come now, cheer up, my boy.

CARLOS. I can't, aunt; I can't. I feel a consuming sadness; a horrible melancholy; I feel like crying. (*He weeps.*)

DOLORES (*weeping, rising*). Poor, poor boy!

INDALECIO (*weeping, rising*). Poor, poor Carlos!

CARLOS. Yes, aunt! Yes, uncle! I must go to Paris immediately.

MARUJA *comes in with a tray containing dishes enough for one person.*

MARUJA. Supper will soon be ready. So that you won't have to wait so long, I'll set the table myself. But what's the matter? Have you been crying?

INDALECIO. Carlos has so affected us with the story of his sickness.

MARUJA (*aside*). What a rascal!

DOLORES (*to MARUJA*). He's very sick!

INDALECIO (*to MARUJA*). He's very weak!

MARUJA. Eating will brace him up. You will see how the prospect of a good meal will revive him. Won't it, Carlos?

CARLOS. I believe it will, for I feel so frightfully weak. (*He puts his hands in his pockets. Aside.*) Great guns! Here are two chocolate drops left over. (*He eats them. DOLORES helps MARUJA set the table. SATURIO comes from the garden.*)

SATURIO. Hello! Hello! Has the traveler arrived yet?

DOLORES. Doctor Saturio!

CARLOS (*aside*). The doctor! I never thought of him!

DOLORES (*to SATURIO*). I don't like his looks.

SATURIO. We'll see—Carlos!

CARLOS (*weakly*). Doctor Saturio.

INDALECIO. Have a seat, Doctor.

SATURIO. No, thanks. This is strictly a professional call. I have received an urgent call again to Villarejo, and a carriage is waiting for me now outside. Now, let's see. How did you stand the trip?

CARLOS. Badly; very badly.

SATURIO (*aside to DOLORES*). His face indicates suffering. Let me have your hand. (*He feels his pulse.*) Temperature normal. Pulse—yes, somewhat weak. How long since you ate anything?

CARLOS. A long time. Not since Madrid.

SATURIO. Then your weakness is not surprising. So long without eating—

INDALECIO. Silly nonsense. That's what I call it.

SATURIO. The pulse indicates nothing alarming.

CARLOS. But I feel very, very bad.

SATURIO. Let me see your tongue. (CARLOS *sticks it out.*) (*To DOLORES.*) Um! That's bad!

DOLORES (*aside to SATURIO*). What?

SATURIO (*to her*). The color of chocolate! I don't like that symptom. Very good, very good. Tomorrow I shall make a more thorough examination.

GREGORIA *comes from the kitchen with a tureen and a chicken on a platter.*

GREGORIA. Supper is ready.

INDALECIO. That's what he needs. Come on, my fine fellow. (CARLOS *starts toward the table.*)

SATURIO. Supper? Under no consideration! Absolute dieting!

CARLOS (*aside*). Great guns!

SATURIO. Now go to bed and rest.

DOLORES. That's right. To bed, my boy, to bed.
(*She leads him towards the stairs.*)

CARLOS (*to SATURIO*). But can't I eat something?

SATURIO. Hot lemonade. Nothing more, nor less.

CARLOS (*gazing at the table*). But—

DOLORES. Rest easy. I'll see that he gets absolutely nothing.

CARLOS. Aunt!

DOLORES. Go to bed, go to bed!

PERICO *comes from the garden.*

PERICO. Doctor Saturio, they are waiting for you.
(*PERICO leaves.*)

SATURIO. Then I must be off. Good afternoon, good day. (*He goes out.*)

INDALECIO. Goodbye.

MARUJA. Goodbye, Doctor Saturio.

DOLORES (*urging CARLOS up the stairs in spite of his appealing glances at the food.*) Go up, my boy; go on up to bed.

MARUJA (*to INDALECIO*). Poor Carlos!

INDALECIO. They're going to starve that boy to death.

MARUJA. That's just what they are doing.

GREGORIA. Shall I take this away?

INDALECIO. No. Leave it. I'll eat it. (*He sits at the table and lifts the cover from the tureen.*)

CURTAIN.

ZARAGUETA

THE SECOND ACT.

SCENE: *Same as Act I. The next morning.*

GREGORIA *is singing at the top of her voice as she bangs the furniture with ineffective sweeps of her feather duster.*

MARUJA (*coming down the stairs*). Gregoria! Hush! Gregoria!

GREGORIA. What do you want, Miss?

MARUJA. For mercy's sake don't yell so loud, and don't smash all the furniture. Remember there's a sick boy upstairs—and my uncle is still asleep, too.

GREGORIA. Huh! Your uncle—he wouldn't wake up if the house tumbled down. When I handed him his chocolate a little while ago I had to punch him to make him take it.

MARUJA. Very well. I'll finish the dusting. You may go to the kitchen. (*Exit GREGORIA.*) Oh, dear me! I've no idea how we'll ever get out of this scrape. Poor Carlos is going to be in an awfully tight place.

Pio appears in the doorway.

PIO. May the blessing of Heaven rest upon this house.

MARUJA. Good morning, Pio. How does it happen you're up so early? (*She goes right on dusting the furniture.*)

PIO. It is the custom of the Seminary. I always hear the mass at break of dawn.

MARUJA. And what brings you here?

PIO. Two reasons. Now, the first is to ask how Carlos spent the night.

MARUJA. Very badly.

PIO. Really?

MARUJA. Most assuredly. Just imagine, he had nothing to eat from the time he left Madrid.

PIO. But haven't they given him some broth?

MARUJA. Not a drop. Doctor Saturio put him on a rigorous diet, and my aunt, who has been sitting up with him all night, hasn't allowed him anything but hot lemonade.

PIO. Goodness! So much for that. Now—the second—

MARUJA. Second what?

PIO. The second purpose I came here for.

MARUJA. Oh, yes.

PIO. Is to speak to you about a very serious matter.

MARUJA. What is it?

PIO. You see, yesterday, I couldn't get my courage up to tell you the truth. I thought I might evade it, but I cannot.

MARUJA. But tell me, tell me. (*She stops dusting.*)

PIO. My mother—may Heaven forgive me—certainly keeps me in hot water.

MARUJA. How?

PIO. She's everlastingly opposed to my being a priest.

MARUJA. Oh, so that's it. Only yesterday she told me she believed you weren't going to finish your theological course.

PIO. Preposterous!

MARUJA. And that she did not want to influence you in your choice of a vocation.

PIO. Preposterous!

MARUJA. And that you are secretly in love.

PIO. Preposterous!

MARUJA. But I don't understand—

PIO. I'm coming to that. I'll explain it to you. My mother is determined that I shall get married.

MARUJA. Really? And to whom?

PIO (*after hesitating a moment*). You.

MARUJA. Me? And so that's her plan?

PIO. Hers. How can you imagine that I'd have anything to do with such an idiotic scheme?

MARUJA. My dear Pio, thank you—for nothing.

PIO. Please, I didn't say that to offend you, but I am called for higher things.

MARUJA. So? Well, if you are called you had better go now. But I can't understand why you tell all this stuff to me.

PIO. Because you alone can extricate me from this difficulty.

MARUJA. Well! It seems that's all I'm here for—to get people out of scrapes.

PIO. I am so bashful I couldn't tell you anything about it yesterday, and later I didn't dare confess to my mother that I hadn't spoken to you about it, but as she always does all the talking and I remain silent, she firmly believes at this instant that we have set the day!

MARUJA. Thank you for nothing! We didn't set the day! And please have the kindness to tell her that there's no danger that we ever shall.

PIO. Oh, goodness me! Please don't get overwrought. I have a scheme to settle everything.

MARUJA. What is it?

PIO. You tell my mother that you are engaged to someone else.

MARUJA. To whom?

PIO. Oh, any one will do—for instance, Carlos.

MARUJA. Preposterous!

PIO. Well, that's the only solution. If you are engaged to someone, I can't be engaged to you.

MARUJA. That's enough! Don't drag me into your affairs. I have my own troubles to think about. Get out of it as best you can, but don't bother me. (*She walks towards the door at the rear.*)

PIO (*to himself*). I'm afraid to tell my mother, for with her temper I'm sure she would chastise me.

DOLORES comes down the stairs.

PIO. Dona Dolores!

DOLORES. Hello, Pio. Good morning.

PIO. How are you?

DOLORES. Worn out, my boy. I've been sitting up all night with poor Carlos.

PIO. How is he?

DOLORES. Just now he is sleeping peacefully.

PIO. That's encouraging.

DOLORES (*to MARUJA*). And your uncle?

MARUJA. He isn't up yet.

DOLORES. Call him, my child; call him. He eats and sleeps so much that some fine day he'll just explode.

PIO. That's just what my mother says. (*MARUJA goes out through the study.*)

DOLORES. How's that?

PIO. That it isn't healthful to sleep so much.

SATURIO appears in the garden door.

SATURIO. Good morning, Senora.

DOLORES. Oh, how do you do, Doctor Saturio?

PIO. Good day to you.

MARUJA (*returning from the study*). Uncle is coming. Good morning, Doctor Saturio.

SATURIO. Hello, little Maruja.

INDALECIO (*appearing at the study door*). Hello, everybody!

DOLORES. Thank Heavens, you're up at last!

INDALECIO. Sakes alive, woman, just remember how I've been up all night.

DOLORES. You tumbled into bed at once—and you had already been napping since ten.

INDALECIO. You're right. I can't stay awake at night; that's the one thing that hurts me most.

SATURIO. How is he? How did the sick boy pass the night?

DOLORES. Very restless, and sighing and groaning a great deal.

MARUJA (*aside*). Of course. Hungry.

SATURIO. Nervousness, merely nervousness.

DOLORES. Just at daybreak he fell asleep. But he must have had some hideous nightmare, for he tossed about the bed exclaiming, "Zaragueta! Zaragueta!"

MARUJA (*aside*). Oh, dear me, dear me!

SATURIO. What a strange thing.

INDALECIO. Zaragueta! Now, who can this Zaragueta be?

PIO. Perhaps it's one of the archbishops!

DOLORES. What's that you're saying?

INDALECIO. After a while we'll ask him.

MARUJA. No! I know who it is.

INDALECIO. Who?

MARUJA. Carlos told me yesterday. Zaragueta is—is Don Hermogenes Zaragueta. (*After thinking a moment.*) One of the doctors that tended him in Madrid.

SATURIO. Is he by any chance the head surgeon?

MARUJA. Yes—the head surgeon. Carlos likes him very much. He is extremely grateful to him. No doubt he dreamed about him.

SATURIO. Zaragueta? I don't know him. Let's go see the patient.

INDALECIO. Come on.

SATURIO. I shall make a thorough examination and then we shall know exactly what the matter is.

MARUJA (*aside*). Dear me, I hope they won't!

INDALECIO (*at the stairs*). After you, Doctor Saturio.

SATURIO. Not at all.

INDALECIO. You go first. (*Exeunt INDALECIO and SATURIO.*)

DOLORES. Maruja, go into the kitchen and tell Gregoria to put some beef stew on so we may have some broth for Carlos.

MARUJA (*aside*). Broth! What he needs is chops!

DOLORES. And where did you put my cook book? I want to see if by any chance I can find a recipe for gelatine flavored with extract of beef.

MARUJA. I think I saw it upstairs in the clothes closet. (*MARUJA goes into the kitchen.*)

DOLORES. Yes; I left it there the other day. I'll go get it. (*DOLORES goes up the stairs.*)

PIO. Please God, I wish I could go to the ten o'clock mass, but my mother is determined that I shall spend all the time possible right here. She just forces me!

PERICO (*in the garden*). Yes, sir. Just step right in.

PIO. Who's that?

PERICO (*at garden door*). This gentleman is asking for the head of the house. (*PERICO disappears in the garden.*)

HERMOGENES *enters from garden.*

HERMOGENES. How do you do?

PIO. Good morning. (*Aside.*) He's a stranger.

HERMOGENES. Is this the house of Senor Ruiperez?

PIO. Yes; he lives here.

HERMOGENES. Up town they told me he lived here, but I wasn't sure. I'm not acquainted here.

PIO. Won't you sit down?

HERMOGENES. What's that?

PIO (*offering him a chair*). Won't you sit down?

HERMOGENES. Ah! (*He sinks into a chair.*)

PIO. I'll go call them. Excuse me a moment. (*He goes up the stairs.*)

HERMOGENES. Eh? Evidently he told me to wait. Oh, I'll wait all right. (*After a pause.*) So far, so good. How will they receive me here? Unpleasantly—as everywhere. But there's no help for it. If I didn't take this method I'd be left in a hole all the time, and the amount is not to be sniffed at. (*Drawing out some papers.*) Here are the notes, amounting with interest to three thousand shining little pesetas. Yes, here they are. "I promise to pay to Don Hermogenes—" You bet he'll pay. If not he, then his aunt and uncle will. (*He rises.*) What may happen? Suppose they insult me? I don't mind that; it only goes in one ear and out the other. To tell the truth, it never goes in at all. That's one of the advantages of being deaf. This is very helpful in business. If someone calls me this or that or the other thing, I simply don't hear. Let them ask me for money when I don't want to lend—try the other door. If they appeal to me with sighs and groans and lamentations—I am a statue. Nothing, nothing! I only hear what I want to hear. These are my rules of philosophy; I can't hear anybody who tries to lower

my profits; for foolish words I've a deaf ear; those who do not want to hear are the most deaf.

DOLORES and Pio come down stairs.

DOLORES. My dear sir—

PIO. This is Senora Dolores.

HERMOGENES. Eh? Eh? Is this Senora Ruiperez to whom I have the honor of speaking?

DOLORES. Yes, at your service.

HERMOGENES. I am happy to make your acquaintance. I have just arrived in this town—

DOLORES. And you wish to see my husband?

HERMOGENES. Exactly; yes, Senora, it is a very nice little town.

DOLORES (*to Pio*). What is he saying?

PIO. I think he must be deaf.

DOLORES. Apparently. (*To HERMOGENES.*) To whom have I the pleasure?—

HERMOGENES. Isn't Senor Ruiperez at home?

DOLORES. Oh, yes; but he's busy just now.

HERMOGENES. How's that? I must tell you I've a little—

DOLORES (*raising her voice*). Yes, yes. My husband is busy.

HERMOGENES. Eh? Eh?

PIO (*at the top of his voice*). Busy!

HERMOGENES. Very well. Then I'll return later.

DOLORES. Just as you wish. What name shall I tell him?

HERMOGENES. No, he doesn't know me. I'll return; I'll return.

DOLORES. Good day.

HERMOGENES. Good day. (*Suddenly coming back.*) What did you say?

DOLORES. Nothing.

PIO (*louder*). Nothing!

HERMOGENES. Oh, I thought you said something. Good day to you, Senora. Good day to you, Senor. (*He goes out through the garden door.*)

DOLORES. Who can that man be?

PIO. Poor fellow! He's as deaf as a post.

DOLORES. I must see if I can find that gelatine. (*She sits down, opens the book and skims through the pages.*)

PIO. Dona Dolores, I'm very sorry to trouble you—

DOLORES. My good boy, you are not troubling me. (*Reading.*) "Duck with peas."

PIO (*seating himself*). Then I'll wait to hear what Doctor Saturio says. I'd like to know what he thinks of Carlos. What can be the matter with the poor fellow?

DOLORES (*reading*). "Hashed liver."

PIO. What!!!

DOLORES. I was reading here.

PIO. Oh, I thought you said he had a hashed liver, for that would be extremely serious.

DOLORES. I should say so! (*She hears SATURIO and INDALECIO coming down the stairs.*) They're coming down.

SATURIO and INDALECIO enter. MARUJA comes in from the kitchen.

DOLORES. How is he, Doctor Saturio? What did you find?

SATURIO. Well, Senora, I'll repeat to you just what I just remarked to Don Indalecio. I respect the opinion of my colleagues in Madrid, but the truth is, I can't find anything especially wrong with that boy.

MARUJA (*aside*). He's going to give the whole thing away!

SATURIO. I examined him carefully—

INDALECIO. Yes, indeed. He thumped him all over, believe me.

SATURIO. And I assure you that there is no lesion in any organ of importance. Temperature normal; the tongue perfectly clear.

MARUJA (*aside*). I'll vouch for that.

SATURIO. Stomach all right, liver the same, spleen the same—

INDALECIO. Kidneys just where they belong.

SATURIO. In short, I believe it is merely a case of nerves.

DOLORES. Well, but is it serious?

SATURIO. Sometimes.

MARUJA (*aside*). Oh, that's a relief!

SATURIO. These nervous upheavals may result in serious complications. He reports that he feels strange pains, that he has had fainting spells—

MARUJA. Yes, he has.

Pio. That's true.

SATURIO. He relates that he had several attacks in Madrid—and—and this is a cause for apprehension as fits sometimes accompany them. Such disturbances sometimes go so far as lunacy.

INDALECIO. For goodness sakes!

DOLORES. Oh, dear me!

Pio. Unfortunate Carlos!

SATURIO. Don't be alarmed. For such cases the most strongly recommended treatment is hydropathy; above all, shower baths. Cold shower baths produce a marvelous effect. I trust I shall be able to cure him with these and with the active life of the country—exercise, hunting—and moderate, nutritive food.

INDALECIO. That's it—good meat and good wine.

SATURIO. No; you must not overload the stomach. We shall begin with milk. You may give him all the milk he asks for—but nothing else.

DOLORES. Rest easy. That's all he'll get.

SATURIO. Let him take two spoonfuls of that prescription I made out.

DOLORES. Exactly.

SATURIO. Well, good people, I must go make my other calls.

INDALECIO. Until I see you again, Doctor.

DOLORES (*handing him his hat*). Goodbye.

PIO. I'll go with you.

SATURIO. Here, my wits are clear out of my head. (*To INDALECIO.*) I was going off without handing to you what I received yesterday in Villarejo. Here are the four thousand pesetas from the wheat. (*He hands over the notes.*)

INDALECIO. Thank you very much.

PIO. That's what my mother is after.

SATURIO. Well, goodbye.

PIO. Goodbye.

INDALECIO. Goodbye.

DOLORES. Goodbye. (*SATURIO and Pio go off through the garden.*)

INDALECIO. I feel more at ease now, Doctor Saturio's opinion has reassured me.

DOLORES. But not me.

MARUJA. Nor me.

INDALECIO. Why not?

DOLORES. Didn't you notice that he didn't say a word about the operation which the doctors in Madrid consider so necessary?

MARUJA. Not a word.

INDALECIO. Yes, that's so.

DOLORES. To tell the truth, if Carlos doesn't improve in a day or so I believe we ought to make the sacrifice and send him to Paris.

MARUJA. That's a good idea.

INDALECIO. To Paris? That would cost a great deal of money.

MARUJA. Not so much, uncle. Carlos said he could manage to do it on four thousand pesetas.

INDALECIO. How does he know?

MARUJA. I'm not sure—he said so.

DOLORES. He must have figured it out.

INDALECIO. Well, if it comes to that, what choice will we have? We'll just have to give him four thousand pesetas and imagine that this year's wheat crop was a failure.

DOLORES. I'm going over to Dona Rita's who has such good cows to see if she can spare me some of her fresh milk. Gregoria! (*To MARUJA.*) Hand me my mantilla. (*MARUJA helps her to put it on.*) Gregoria!

GREGORIA *entering.*

GREGORIA. Did you call me?

DOLORES. Yes, you are going on an errand with me. Bring a large pitcher. (*GREGORIA goes into the kitchen and returns at once with the pitcher. To INDALECIO.*) Give me the prescription; I'll leave it with the druggist as I go by.

INDALECIO. No, I want to take it myself and get a bottle of that tonic that has made me feel so well the last two years—and improved my appetite so much.

DOLORES. Poor suffering man!

INDALECIO. Yes, dear; these calamities upset my health. Why, this morning with my chocolate I couldn't even finish my second bun. Let's be off.

DOLORES. Be ready if Carlos calls for anything.

MARUJA. Don't worry about that.

(DOLORES, INDALECIO and GREGORIA go out through the garden door.)

MARUJA. Thank heaven, I'm alone at last. Poor Carlos must be famished. I'm going to give him something to eat. (*She goes to cupboard.*) Half a chicken! Splendid! Boiled ham! He'll like that! Let's see what else is here. Pickled lobster! Grand! He must be ravenous. Now, some bread and a bottle of wine. (*She has placed all these things upon the table.*)

CARLOS (*he comes feebly down the stairs, clinging to the bannister*). Oh! My legs are giving way under me! Maruja!

MARUJA. Carlos!

CARLOS. I saw my aunt and uncle leave and I'm coming down to get something to eat. I can't stand it any longer.

MARUJA. I was just going to bring all this up to you.

CARLOS. Oh, joy! Maruja, you are a brick! (*He sits at the table, begins to eat voraciously.*) Chicken—ham—pickled lobster! What more could I ask? Just the food I dreamed about last night.

MARUJA. No, you dreamed about something else.

CARLOS. About what?

MARUJA. That money lender in Madrid.

CARLOS. What?

MARUJA. Aunt Dolores heard you cry out in your dreams, "Zaragueta!"

CARLOS. Goodness gracious!

MARUJA. No. Zaragueta!

CARLOS. No, one could have been mistaken for the other. Have they found out everything?

MARUJA. No, don't excite yourself. I made them

believe that Zaragueta is the name of the chief doctor who attended you.

CARLOS. Thank you. What a great little cousin you are. And how good this chicken is.

MARUJA. Don't eat so fast; you'll choke yourself. They won't be back for a long time. I'm watching for them. (*She goes to the door to look out.*)

CARLOS. What do they say about it? Do you think I'll be able to extract the money from them?

MARUJA. It's quite possible. They're on the way to giving it. (*She comes back to his side.*)

CARLOS. That Paris idea hit them hard.

MARUJA. Oh—fine fish—

CARLOS. Fish later. I see it's lobster. Now for the ham!

MARUJA. You're a fine fish!

CARLOS. Oh! And what about Doctor Saturio? What does that old fool say? I'm still sore from his examination.

MARUJA. He's not as foolish as you think. To prove that, he declares you're not sick at all.

CARLOS (*terrified*). Did he say that?

MARUJA. Now, don't get excited. But as he has no reason to doubt your word, and believes all the fine tales you relate, he thinks you are suffering from nerves.

CARLOS. Well, that suits me. So does this. I'll try it on the lobster. (*MARUJA goes to peer out at the door.*) I'm feeling better already. Um—what a taste! This spiced vinegar makes the lobster simply delicious.

MARUJA. Oh!

CARLOS (*rising*). Eh?

MARUJA. What's the matter?

CARLOS. I thought they were coming back.

MARUJA. Don't be frightened. How nervous you are. (CARLOS resumes his seat and continues eating.)

CARLOS. Naturally, you heard Doctor Saturio, didn't you? That's what's the matter with me. Nerves. Weren't you going to tell me something?

MARUJA. Yes, I forgot to tell you what occurred between Pio and me.

CARLOS. What was it?

MARUJA (*laughing*). The poor fellow confessed that his mother is forcing him to give up his studying for the priesthood to make love to me, and then marry me.

CARLOS. Well, she's a fine fish after good bait! That's certain. She couldn't get a better daughter-in-law than you.

MARUJA (*leaning over the back of a chair facing CARLOS*). But Pio doesn't want me.

CARLOS. He's a fool!

MARUJA. And to get himself out of the muddle his mother has plunged him in—what do you suppose he suggested to me?

CARLOS. How should I know? Something ridiculous.

MARUJA (*still laughing*). That I should tell Dona Blasa that I cannot accept the attentions of her son because I am engaged—engaged—to you.

CARLOS (*suddenly stops eating*). That doesn't sound so foolish to me.

MARUJA. Don't say anything more, for goodness sake!

CARLOS (*rising*). Now, what's so strange about that? You are young, so am I? You are pretty; I'm not—so repulsive—I say, it seems to me I'm not so repulsive.

MARUJA. No one said you are.

CARLOS. I may be wrong, but my face isn't so bad, and we won't discuss my conduct.

MARUJA. No; we had better not discuss that!

CARLOS. My dear girl, you know I'm penitent, and all penitents go to heaven. And what better heaven could I desire than this fascinating little face—

MARUJA. That will do, that will do!

CARLOS. And these eyes—and this mouth—and this dear little body. (*He puts his arm around her.*) You know, my dear, Pio's suggestion wasn't so silly after all.

MARUJA. Oh, yes. I'd be a wise one to believe everything you say. After the life you've led. You've made a great many promises in Madrid.

CARLOS. I? I swear that I have made promises to no one except Zaragueta. But surely you're not jealous of him. (*He still tries to embrace her.*)

MARUJA. Come, that's enough of your silly talk. Eat some more. (*Gently pushing him away.*)

CARLOS. I can't eat another bite. I've already eaten like a vulture. I feel so well now! My hunger satisfied, and my heart full of sweet yearnings!

MARUJA (*at the door*). Oh, here comes Aunt Dolores! Help me put all these things away, so she won't know that you've eaten anything. (*Together they clear the table and put all the things into the cupboard. The only things remaining upon the table are the caraffe of water and the two glasses, which were there from the beginning of the act.*)

CARLOS. Now for another fainting spell. (*He sinks into a chair*).

GREGORIA and DOLORES enter. GREGORIA goes to the table and picks up a glass.

DOLORES (*to MARUJA, who has met them at the door*). Has anything happened?

MARUJA. No, aunt. But here is the patient.

DOLORES. Hello! How are you?

CARLOS. Very well—I mean, so-so. I never feel right well. Oh! (*Sighing.*)

GREGORIA. You're looking better today. Yesterday when you came in you looked like a dead one.

DOLORES (*aside to her*). Don't say such things. Let me have that. (*Taking the pitcher of milk.*) Here's some fine rich milk for you, right from the cow. Drink a glass right away. (*Pouring it.*)

CARLOS. No. I can't swallow another drop.

DOLORES. What's that?

MARUJA. He's determined not to take a single thing. I wanted to give him some cookies and wine—

DOLORES. Oh, no, no! Don't you know what Doctor Saturio said? Milk—nothing but milk. (*Forcing it upon him.*) Drink it; drink it.

CARLOS (*pushing it aside*). On top of that vinegar!

DOLORES. What's that?

MARUJA. He's afraid of upsetting his stomach.

DOLORES. This will help you; you must take something. Drink it right down.

MARUJA. Drink it like a good boy.

CARLOS (*aside*). There's no escaping it. (*In three gulps he empties the glass. When he pauses DOLORES encourages him. He shudders.*)

DOLORES. There you are. Now you see how much better you'll feel. With good milk like this and a little outdoor exercise you'll be all right in a little while. (*GREGORIA deposits pitcher and glass upon the table and disappears into the kitchen.*)

CARLOS. No, no, Aunt Dolores; I'll have to go to Paris.

DOLORES. Well, if there's no other way out of it, you'll have to go.

CARLOS. There is no other way; you must take my word for it.

DOLORES. Well, cheer up, my boy; and you, too, Maruja.

CARLOS. I'm cheerful already.

MARUJA. We must try to distract his mind.

DOLORES. First of all, you must not get worried. You must control your nerves. At your age any illness can be cured, no matter how serious.

CARLOS. Oh, my! (*Groaning from a real pain, and pressing his hands to his body.*) That pickled lobster!

DOLORES (*to MARUJA*). Poor boy! You can see from his face how he suffers. Undoubtedly Doctor Saturio doesn't know what ails this boy.

MARUJA (*to DOLORES*). I'm sure he doesn't. (*DOLORES goes into the study.*)

CARLOS (*rising*). Oh, how I am suffering!

MARUJA. Be still. You needn't groan now. Aunt Dolores has left.

CARLOS. This is the real thing now.

MARUJA. Eh?

CARLOS. That vinegar and milk! I was afraid of it. I'm in agony.

MARUJA. That's plain. You ate so fast, no wonder it didn't agree with you.

CARLOS. The meal was all right. It was that confounded milk. Oh, again!

MARUJA. I'll go make you a cup of tea.

CARLOS. Yes, for heaven's sake, give me something to relieve this! (*MARUJA goes into the kitchen.*) Oh, oh, oh! What a fate! This is vengeance from on high. (*He sits down at the table.*)

INDALECIO *enters.*

INDALECIO. Hello, you here? How's your health?

CARLOS. Oh, I'm suffering.

INDALECIO. Pooh. It's only imaginary.

CARLOS. No. This time it's the real thing.

INDALECIO. Let's see. Where does it hurt?

CARLOS. Terrible pains—here.

INDALECIO. Your stomach?

CARLOS. Yes, uncle.

INDALECIO. Same old story. Weakness—nothing but weakness. (*Peering into the pitcher.*) They've brought the milk, haven't they? You must drink a glass.

CARLOS. No. For goodness sake, no! (*Rising.*) I just drank one.

INDALECIO. You must take another. Doctor Saturio says you can have as much milk as you want.

CARLOS. Yes. But I don't want any at all!

INDALECIO. Is it possible? So rich, so nutritious—what cream it has! I could drink that alone. (*He drinks from the pitcher. DOLORES comes back.*)

DOLORES. What are you doing, husband—drinking the milk?

INDALECIO. Yes, wife, I'm trying to encourage him. (*She takes the pitcher from him and puts it on the table.*)

DOLORES. What he needs is to get out of the house. He ought to walk, to take exercise.

INDALECIO. Your aunt is right. Why don't you take a stroll through the town?

CARLOS. No; I don't feel like meeting people. (*He is still suffering.*)

INDALECIO. Well, go off that way, through the garden, along the banks of the river, until you come within sight of the hill of Oregano.

DOLORES. It's a beautiful day. Take a gun and see if you can't knock down a few birds. (*She gives him a gun, a game bag and a cartridge pouch.*)

INDALECIO. That's a good idea. We'll cook them with rice for dinner. They're fine eating.

CARLOS. Yes, uncle. I'll go up to the hill. (*He goes out hurriedly.*)

DOLORES. Why don't you go with him?

INDALECIO. I have to do something. I'm going up to the pigeon loft.

MARUJA *comes in from the kitchen.*

MARUJA. Here's the tea. Where's Carlos? Upstairs?

DOLORES. No; he went for a walk. What's that?

MARUJA. A cup of tea. He was complaining of his stomach.

DOLORES. Well, he's gone out. He won't need it. Take it back.

INDALECIO. No. Bring it here. I'll drink it.

DOLORES. Indalecio!

INDALECIO. Tea always warms a fellow up. (*He drinks the tea.*)

DOLORES. What a man! Maruja, go upstairs and straighten up Carlos's room.

MARUJA. Yes, Aunt Dolores. (*She goes upstairs.*)

INDALECIO. I'm going to feed my little pigeons.

DOLORES. How careful you are of them.

INDALECIO. Yes, indeed. Yesterday I found four fat little squabs. They'll taste fine with tomato sauce. (*He starts toward the stairs.*)

HERMOGENES *appears at the door.*

HERMOGENES. Excuse me, but—

INDALECIO. Who's there?

DOLORES. I forgot to tell you a stranger had been inquiring for you.

INDALECIO. Come in.

DOLORES. Speak up to him.

INDALECIO. Why, what has he done?

DOLORES. Nothing. He's deaf.

INDALECIO. Oh. (*Shouting.*) Come in!

HERMOGENES *enters.*

HERMOGENES. Are you Don Indalecio Ruiperez?

INDALECIO. Yes, I am.

HERMOGENES. I'm extremely delighted at knowing you. How are you? That's very nice. And all the family well, too? That pleases me very much—

INDALECIO (*aside*). Well he carries on both sides of the conversation. Have a seat.

HERMOGENES. What?

DOLORES and INDALECIO (*shouting*). Have a seat! (*All three sit down. INDALECIO takes the arm chair. DOLORES is at his left.*)

INDALECIO (*to DOLORES*). Who can this man be?

HERMOGENES. You are surprised at my visit, so I shall explain the reason for it.

DOLORES (*to INDALECIO*). Now we'll know.

HERMOGENES. I have found it necessary to leave Madrid to come to Salamanca where I have a sick brother-in-law. I arrived early this morning. Fortunately, I found him much improved.

DOLORES. We are glad to hear it.

HERMOGENES. How's that?

BOTH (*shouting*). We are glad to hear it!

HERMOGENES. Ah, thanks. I knew this town is only a short distance away, so I said to myself I shall take advantage of this to pay my respects to the Ruiperez.

INDALECIO (*to DOLORES*). Why should he call on us?

DOLORES. He'll tell us in a minute.

HERMOGENES. Eh?

DOLORES. No—nothing.

INDALECIO (*louder*). Nothing!

HERMOGENES. Yesterday, before leaving Madrid, I was at your nephew's—

DOLORES. Oh! Do you know Carlos?

HERMOGENES. Eh?

INDALECIO (*louder*). Carlos!

HERMOGENES. Yes, Carlos, Carlos. His landlady told me he had left on the express to the North. This surprised me, because I did not believe he would go off that way, without saying a word to me. He should have acted differently toward me.

INDALECIO. Toward you? Why?

HERMOGENES (*not hearing*). In this he acted very badly, very badly indeed.

DOLORES. Very badly—and why do you say that?

INDALECIO. Who are you?

HERMOGENES. What's that?

BOTH (*louder*). Who are you?

HERMOGENES. I'm positive you don't know my name. Your nephew wouldn't mention me. In Madrid they call me Hermogenes Zaragueta.

DOLORES (*jumping up*). What?

INDALECIO (*jumping up*). Is it you?

DOLORES (*to INDALECIO*). Carlos's doctor!

INDALECIO. Doctor Zaragueta! (*They shake his hand heartily.*)

DOLORES. How pleased we are to see you here.

HERMOGENES (*surprised*). What?

BOTH. How pleased we are to see you.

HERMOGENES (*aside*). Such a hearty reception. (*With some suspicion.*) But—do you know—who I am?

DOLORES. Yes, indeed.

INDALECIO. I should say we do. (*Making him sit down in the arm chair.*)

DOLORES. We know just how much our nephew owes to you.

HERMOGENES. Eh?

INDALECIO (*louder*). We know just how much our nephew owes to you.

HERMOGENES. Oh, no; not so much. (*The two others sit down.*)

DOLORES. Oh, yes. It is inexcusable that he should leave Madrid without telling you.

HERMOGENES. He surprised me. Because this is a delicate matter—

DOLORES. Yes; he's so very delicate.

INDALECIO. He was very indiscreet to leave without speaking to you.

DOLORES. We'll all give him a scolding a little later.

HERMOGENES. A little later? Why, is he here?

INDALECIO. Yes, sir.

DOLORES. He arrived yesterday afternoon. He's just gone out for a little walk.

HERMOGENES. I did not know it. I'm extremely pleased that he should finally decide to resort to you. I urged him to frequently, but he was always afraid you would be angry.

DOLORES. Poor boy!

INDALECIO. He is so thoughtful of us!

HERMOGENES. Well, as his landlady did not tell me where he had gone, I took advantage of my trip to Salamanca to come pay you a call and to inform you of the true condition of your nephew, believing that you are ignorant of it.

DOLORES (*louder*). No. We know all about it.

INDALECIO. Tell us frankly, now that he can't hear you, what is your opinion of Carlos?

HERMOGENES. You must not be alarmed. In youth all this is of no real importance. I believe he'll get over it in time.

DOLORES. May it please heaven!

HERMOGENES. If you only knew some of the other cases I have in Madrid. This of Carlos, why it amounts to nothing.

DOLORES. The doctor here says he is suffering from nervousness.

HERMOGENES. Eh?

INDALECIO (*louder*). He is so nervous!

HERMOGENES. Very nervous, very. I knew that the first time he came to see me. He was so frightened, so disturbed; but I told him, "You must not allow yourself to worry over this. Have a little courage. I'll help you." I have helped so many.

DOLORES. I believe it.

HERMOGENES. If you could only see how little gratitude some of them show for me.

DOLORES. But we are keenly grateful to you.

INDALECIO. And we shall pay you what you deserve.

HERMOGENES. Thanks, thanks. (*Then aside.*) Oh, I knew they would pay me.

INDALECIO. So then you think it necessary to send Carlos to Paris?

HERMOGENES. To Paris? I don't see any reason against it, but that's for you to decide. (*Aside.*) What difference does it make to me where they want to send him?

INDALECIO (*absentmindedly speaking loudly to HERMOGENES*). Do you think—

HERMOGENES. What?

INDALECIO. Nothing, nothing. (*In his natural voice to DOLORES.*) Do you think we ought to invite him to stay to dinner?

DOLORES. It would be only natural.

INDALECIO. You aren't thinking of going back to Salamanca today, are you?

HERMOGENES. Yes. If possible I want to go back this very afternoon.

INDALECIO. Why are you in such a hurry?

HERMOGENES. I'm not really in a hurry, but—

DOLORES. But nothing. You must stay with us until tomorrow. (*They all get up.*)

INDALECIO. You must not disappoint us.

DOLORES. You must see the town and the fine suburbs.

INDALECIO. And the church. They say it is Byzantine.

HERMOGENES. Eh?

BOTH (*raising their voices higher and higher*). Byzantine!

DOLORES. And you will hear the organ.

INDALECIO (*to her*). How can he hear the organ when he's deaf?

HERMOGENES. Well, well, since you are determined I shall stay here today. But let me write a few words to my sister who expects me back tonight.

INDALECIO. Certainly, sir. You may go into my study.

DOLORES (*who has gone to the door and is looking out*). Oh, there is Doctor Saturio.

INDALECIO. Call him, call him.

HERMOGENES. Eh?

INDALECIO. We are going to have you meet the village doctor.

HERMOGENES (*shrugging his shoulders*). Oh, all right.

DOLORES (*calling*). Doctor Saturio! Doctor Saturio!

INDALECIO. I'm so glad he'll have the pleasure of meeting Doctor Zaragueta. (*He slaps him familiarly on the back.*)

HERMOGENES. Say! Say! (*INDALECIO goes to the door.*) What a hospitable family. Knowing that, I can add just a little more interest.

Enter SATURIO.

SATURIO. What has happened? Is the patient worse?

INDALECIO. No, indeed. We called you so that we may present you to one of your colleagues.

DOLORES. Carlos's doctor.

INDALECIO. Doctor Zaragueta, who came to Salamanca to see a patient, and did us the honor to visit us.

SATURIO. Well, what luck. (*Approaching him.*) I am very glad.

HERMOGENES. The same to you.

INDALECIO (*to DOLORES*). Is the study in order?

DOLORES. I don't know. I'll go see.

INDALECIO. I will go with you to put out the writing paper. (*To the two men.*) Now you gentlemen, just make yourselves at home. (*They go into the study.*)

SATURIO. How fortunate I am to meet you here. (*He offers the arm-chair to HERMOGENES, who sits down. After the usual pause characteristic of professional visits SATURIO hands him a cigarette.*)

HERMOGENES (*aside*). Meeting such people bores me stiff. What interest can I find in knowing a village doctor?

SATURIO (*aside*). Now we'll show this city doctor

that we village doctors know a thing or two. A cigarette?

HERMOGENES. Thank you.

SATURIO. It gives me a great deal of satisfaction to know you. I've seen your name quoted frequently in the medical journals with such high praise that I rejoice at having this opportunity to talk to you; to tell you my opinion concerning the sickness of our patient, and to know whether I have the honor of coinciding with the diagnosis you made, but of which I am completely ignorant.

HERMOGENES (*aside*). What is this fellow talking about? (*He emits puffs of smoke entirely oblivious of SATURIO.*)

SATURIO. After I had submitted the patient to an examination of auscultation and percussion, minute in every detail, I am convinced that the vital organs are in a healthy physiological condition, that there is no appreciable lesion, and that in my opinion the affliction has its seat only and exclusively in the nervous centers, in both their direct and reflex actions. It is a question, then, in my humble opinion, of a true nervous prostration; a neurasthenia; consequently all the therapeutic treatment ought to tend to establish the equilibrium between the two systems. Do you agree with me?

HERMOGENES. Eh?

SATURIO. Do we coincide in our diagnosis?

HERMOGENES (*carelessly*). I haven't understood a word you've said.

SATURIO (*piqued*). I thought I explained quite clearly. I said do we agree in our diagnosis? (*Raising his voice.*) You certainly understand what I mean by diagnosis?

DOLORES and INDALECIO come back from the study.

SATURIO (*rising*). What is this man talking about?

DOLORES. Didn't you notice how deaf he is?

SATURIO. Deaf!

INDALECIO. Totally deaf.

SATURIO. You ought to have told me. (*To HERMOGENES indicating his ear.*) You?

HERMOGENES (*pointing to his ears*). Oh, yes. In this one, a little; in this one, not a sound.

SATURIO. Confound it, man; confound it!

HERMOGENES. Eh?

SATURIO (*shouting in his ear*). Confound it!!

INDALECIO (*raising his voice, to SATURIO*). You must come back—Oh, I thought I was talking to him. (*Lowering his voice.*) You must come back to eat with us. Doctor Zaragueta will not be leaving until tomorrow—

SATURIO (*to HERMOGENES*). Oh, well, then we can talk at our leisure.

HERMOGENES. Eh?

SATURIO (*louder*). Later on we can talk.

HERMOGENES. Oh! (*Aside.*) What a gabbler this doctor is? (*To DOLORES.*) May I go write my note?

DOLORES. Just as you say

HERMOGENES (*to SATURIO*). Excuse me.

SATURIO and HERMOGENES (*together*). It's been a great pleasure—

HERMOGENES. Good day. (*He goes into the study.*)

SATURIO. I must be going. You dine at twelve?

INDALECIO. Yes, twelve sharp.

SATURIO. I shall not fail you. You'll see that Doctor Zaragueta agrees with me about Carlos. Nerves—nothing but nerves. Cold shower baths—nothing but cold shower baths. (*He goes out through the garden.*)

INDALECIO. Hurry, Dolores, hurry! Get dinner at

once. It must be a regular banquet. This is for a man who is accustomed to good eating in Madrid.

DOLORES. You mean it's for you. You're always ready for food.

INDALECIO. Well, I can't deny that.

MARUJA *comes down the stairs.*

DOLORES. Oh, Maruja, tell Gregoria to run to the butcher's for a leg of mutton and to take down one of the hams hanging in the pantry.

MARUJA. Why?

INDALECIO. We have an important guest.

MARUJA. A guest? Who is it?

DOLORES. You could never guess. Carlos's doctor.

MARUJA. Doctor Saturio?

DOLORES. No; the one from Madrid.

INDALECIO. The one he dreamed about last night.

DOLORES. Doctor Zaragueta.

MARUJA. Impossible!

DOLORES. He just arrived a few minutes ago. He's in the study now writing a note.

MARUJA (*very much disturbed*). Dear me, dear me!

INDALECIO (*opening the door to the cellar*). A very agreeable man.

DOLORES. It's a pity he's so deaf.

MARUJA (*aside*). That's he! But why did he come here?

DOLORES. Don't get so excited. Just for the pleasure of getting to know us.

MARUJA (*aside*). They don't suspect a thing. And Carlos? Has he seen him yet?

DOLORES. No. He hasn't come back from his walk.

INDALECIO. Dolores, come down into the cellar with me.

DOLORES. What for?

INDALECIO. To open that cask of old sherry.

DOLORES. Let Perico do it.

INDALECIO. He's too stupid. Don't you remember what happened to that wine from Priorato? He left the spigot open and lost nearly half of it. We'll put this into the bottles ourselves. Come on.

DOLORES. I'll come. (*To MARUJA.*) Get out the silver, knives and forks and have the silver service cleaned.

MARUJA. Yes, aunt.

INDALECIO (*partly down the cellar stairs*). Good wines are the thing for such occasion as this. Our sherry ought to be just right. It's just your age—fifty-four years. It certainly ought to be mellow.

DOLORES. Go on, husband; go on.

INDALECIO. Be careful; don't fall. (*They go down into the cellar.*)

MARUJA. Poor Carlos! What a terrible time there will be when aunt and uncle find it all out. I don't know what to do!

INDALECIO (*from the cellar*). Oh, Maruja!

MARUJA (*at the cellar door*). What is it?

INDALECIO. Fix something for dessert; custard, or egg whip, or float, or whatever you wish.

MARUJA. Very well, uncle. Much I feel like preparing sweet things. They say he's in there. (*She looks through the keyhole of the study door.*) Yes. There he is, writing. Dear me! What can he be writing?

CARLOS *entering at the other side of the room.*

CARLOS. What's up? What are you looking at?

MARUJA. Carlos, for goodness sake, come here.

CARLOS. What's the matter?

MARUJA. Look at who is in here.

CARLOS. Who? (*He deposits the gun, the game bag and the cartridges upon the large chest.*)

MARUJA. Look. You'll see.

CARLOS (*peering through the keyhole*). Za—Za—Zaragueta! (*He backs away from the door, stunned.*)

MARUJA. Yes. He.

CARLOS. That man here! When did he come?

MARUJA. Just a moment ago.

CARLOS. Has he seen my aunt and uncle?

MARUJA. Yes.

CARLOS. Then he has told them everything!

MARUJA. Fortunately, not yet. As I told them this man was your physician they have taken him for a doctor, and doubtless his deafness has helped us out.

CARLOS. Are you certain that aunt and uncle suspect nothing?

MARUJA. Not a thing. They have even invited him to stay to dinner. They are down in the cellar now bottling wine to do honor to him.

(*This entire scene moves very rapidly.*)

CARLOS. Maruja, my dear, I am lost! What shall I do?

MARUJA. I don't know how to advise you.

CARLOS. The only thing I can do is to run away. I shall leave this very minute.

MARUJA. But where?

CARLOS. I don't know. To Madrid, any place. From there I can write to aunt and uncle telling them the whole truth, begging them to pardon me. If they grant it I shall come back; if not, goodbye, cousin-dear-forever. (*Affectionately.*)

MARUJA. Carlos!

CARLOS (*at the door*). There is no other way out.

Goodbye, goodbye. (*Pausing.*) But how can I flee when I haven't a single coin?

MARUJA. Don't stop for that. I'll give you what I've saved.

CARLOS. I don't know whether I ought—but I ought. Give me whatever you wish.

MARUJA. All I have.

CARLOS. No—not all. A hundred pesetas will be enough.

MARUJA. I'll go upstairs as quickly as I can. (*She runs up the stairs.*)

CARLOS. And that fellow has come to ruin all my prospects. Forces me to run away. Why should I leave? He's the one who ought to go. I'll chase him out of this town at once. My aunt and uncle are down there. Here's my chance. (*He closes the cellar door and locks it.*) Here. I'll need you. (*He picks up the gun.*) It's not loaded, but it will scare him, anyway. There's no time to lose. (*He draws near to the study door.*) He's coming out. (*He cocks the gun.*)

HERMOGENES (*coming out, placing the stamp upon the letter*). What nice people! They even furnished the stamp for me.

CARLOS (*pointing the gun at him*). Get out of here at once!

HERMOGENES (*terrified*). Carlos! Dear little Carlos!

CARLOS (*aiming*). Get out—or I'll kill you!

HERMOGENES. Mercy! Help! (*He backs up against the wall between the study and the store room and stands as though glued to it.*)

CARLOS. Get out of here!

HERMOGENES. Murder! Murder!

PIO *appears at the garden door*, GREGORIA and PER-

ICO come out of the kitchen. HERMOGENES dashes precipitously into the study, locking the door behind him.

GREGORIA. Saints above!

PERICO. Master, what are you doing?

PIO. Overpower him! Overpower him! He's gone crazy! Doctor Saturio was afraid of that! (*Pio and PERICO seize the struggling CARLOS by the arms.*)

CARLOS. Let me go; let me go! That fellow is a scoundrel!

PIO. Raving crazy!

PERICO. Master, for heaven's sake!

CARLOS. Let me go, let me go!

PIO. Lock him up, lock him up! (*All this is almost at the same time, and very rapidly spoken.*)

PERICO. Where?

GREGORIA. Here, in the store room. (*She opens the door of the store room. She helps the two men and finally the three of them force CARLOS inside and lock the door.*)

PIO and GREGORIA. In with him!

PIO. Crazy! Raving crazy!

PERICO. He's safe there, you bet. (*Turning the key.*)

PIO. What a terrible catastrophe!

GREGORIA. Gee, how he scared me!

CARLOS (*in the store room*). Open this! Open this! (*Blows are heard upon the cellar door. The three jump away from it.*)

ALL OF THEM. Oh!

INDALECIO (*below*). Gregoria!

DOLORES (*below*). Perico!

GREGORIA. The master and mistress!

BOTH (*below*). Open! Open!

PERICO *opens the door and the two rush up into the room.*

DOLORES. Who locked us down there?

INDALECIO. What has happened?

DOLORES. Whose voices did we hear?

MARUJA (*dashing down the stairs*). Dear me, what has happened?

PERICO. Oh, master!

GREGORIA. Oh, mistress!

PIO. Oh, Don Indalecio! Oh, Dona Dolores!

INDALECIO. But what has happened?

CARLOS (*in the store room*). Open this door!

DOLORES. Carlos there?

PIO. We locked him in.

INDALECIO. Why?

PIO. He's gone crazy.

MARUJA, DOLORES, INDALECIO. Eh?

PIO. He was going to shoot that gentleman.

INDALECIO, DOLORES. Saints above!

MARUJA. How terrible!

PIO. He had a fit, just as Doctor Saturio predicted.

CARLOS. That's a lie. I'm not crazy. Don Zaraguetta is a rogue!

DOLORES. Oh, my! To call that splendid gentleman a rogue!

INDALECIO. There's no doubting it. He's gone crazy!

DOLORES. Where is the gentleman?

PIO. He fled into the study.

INDALECIO (*calling*). Senor de Zaraguetta!

DOLORES. Come out. There's no danger now.

INDALECIO. He's locked the door on the inside.

PIO. He was awfully frightened.

DOLORES. He doesn't answer.

INDALECIO. Certainly not. He can't hear me. Let him alone; he'll come out.

DOLORES. We ought to have the doctor.

PÍO. Call Doctor Saturio.

INDALECIO. I'll run to his house. (*He dashes out.*)

PÍO. I'll go to the drug store to see if he is there. (*He dashes out.*)

CARLOS. Open, or I'll break this door down.

DOLORES (*frightened*). Saints preserve us! (*She moves away from the door.*)

PÉRICO. Don't be afraid. That door's strong. (*He goes out through the garden.*)

DOLORES. Oh, mercy, mercy! What a terrible misfortune! My poor, poor nephew!

MARUJA. Now, don't get worked up, aunt. Gregoria, make her some herb tea. Go drink it. (*She pushes her gently towards the kitchen. She speaks loud enough to let CARLOS hear.*) I'll stay here.

GREGORIA. Come, mistress. Don't be so upset!

DOLORES. Poor little Carlos! (*Going into the kitchen with GREGORIA.*) My poor, poor boy!

MARUJA. Just some herb tea—herb tea. (*She closes the kitchen door. Crossing the stage she opens the store room door.*) Now you must go away from here. There is no other solution.

CARLOS. Oh, Maruja; you dear girl!

MARUJA. What have you done?

CARLOS. Something terrible. I wanted to frighten him. I must leave—leave this instant.

MARUJA. Take this money—eighty pesetas.

CARLOS. Is this all? How good you are to me. (*Kissing her hand.*) Goodbye, Maruja, goodbye.

MARUJA. Are you going to leave your valise upstairs?

CARLOS. Don't talk to me of valises. Throw me my overcoat from the window—and a kiss, if you will. (MARUJA runs upstairs and CARLOS goes out into the garden.)

HERMOGENES (*opening the door stealthily*). There seems to be nobody here; at least I don't hear anything. At times deafness is very inconvenient. No, there is nobody here. I can leave now. I'll make a voluntary retreat. (*He goes towards the garden door but returns at once.*) Oh! There's Carlos again! He saw me. He's going to kill me. Heaven protect me! (*He dashes into the store room and closes the door after him.*)

CARLOS (*coming back from the garden*). Now, you listen to me. You've shut yourself in there, have you? Then here you'll stay. (*He turns the key, then puts it into his pocket.*) Now, I can go off with an easier feeling. (*He goes to the rear door. Hearing SATURIO and INDALECIO approaching he returns to the middle of the room.*) Great guns! My uncle and Doctor Saturio! What shall I do? I'll slip off through the back yard. (*He starts towards the kitchen.*)

DOLORES (*in the kitchen*). Don't bother about me. I don't want a thing.

CARLOS. My aunt. I don't want her to see me. (*He retreats to the study, goes in and locks the door.*)

GREGORIA and DOLORES come in from the kitchen.

GREGORIA. But, Senora—

DOLORES. I'm just on the verge of breaking down!

SATURIO enters, followed by INDALECIO and Pio.

SATURIO. Just keep cool—keep cool!

DOLORES. Oh, Doctor Saturio.

SATURIO. Calm yourself. I was afraid of this, but there is a remedy for everything. Carlos is in the store room?

DOLORES. Yes, Doctor.

SATURIO (*nearing the door*). Well, then, let's open the door.

PIO. Be careful—he is raving.

SATURIO. He'll obey me.

PIO. But he's got a gun.

SATURIO (*halting*). Oh, that alters the situation.

DOLORES. He was going to shoot his Doctor. (SATURIO *retreats*.)

SATURIO. So he's rabid against doctors? Then we'll be more careful. I don't trust lunatics, especially when they carry guns. Where is the Doctor?

DOLORES. He locked himself in the study. (*She tries the door*.) It's still locked.

SATURIO. Call him. We must consult him.

DOLORES (*loudly*). Senor de Zaragueta! Senor de Zaragueta!

INDALECIO. Yes; now try his other ear.

SATURIO. Do what?

INDALECIO. I say he can't hear; he's deaf.

SATURIO. That's so. Well, it doesn't matter. I believe he would approve of my treatment. What is Perico doing? Ask him to bring in the things I told him to get ready. (GREGORIA *goes to the garden door*.)

PIO (*listening at the store room door*). It seems to me he's very quiet now. I don't hear him, Carlos!

DOLORES (*joining him*). Carlos, dear!

INDALECIO. Maybe he's committed suicide!

SATURIO. No. Only a fainting spell, perhaps. There's no time to be lost. There we are!

GREGORIA *comes in with a large bucketful of water*. PERICO *follows her lugging a garden pump and hose and a step ladder*.

DOLORES (*anxiously*). What are you going to do?

SATURIO. Hydrotherapy, Senora, the water cure. Give him a cold shower bath. That will calm him.

DOLORES. But if he's in a faint?

SATURIO. This will bring him to. (*The bucket has been placed near the door.*) Let's see. Bring that ladder here. (*He leans it against the top of the door, just below the transom.*) Is the water cold? (*He dips his hand in it.*) Yes.

DOLORES. But, Doctor Saturio—

INDALECIO. Don't interfere. He knows what he's doing. (*When no one is looking he drinks from the pitcher of milk on the table.*)

SATURIO. The apparatus isn't exactly appropriate, but since it's all we have—give me the hose. (*He starts up the ladder, pauses, then comes down. To himself.*) No, he has a gun. (*To PERICO.*) Perico, you take this and go up the ladder. Pio, you work the pump. Look through the transom carefully. Do you see him?

PERICO (*from the top of the ladder*). I see a dark heap beyond a pile of wood.

SATURIO. Now—turn it on him! (*To Pio.*) Pump, Pio—harder. (*To PERICO.*) Aim right at his head. (*There is noise of the water.*)

HERMOGENES (*yelling in the store room*). Hey! Hey!

SATURIO. He's come to! Steady, steady!

HERMOGENES. Hey! Hey!

MARUJA *comes down the stairs.*

MARUJA. What's going on here?

CARLOS *comes from the study.*

CARLOS. I guess that will be enough.

(*The group becomes rigid with consternation.*)

SATURIO (*recovering*). Carlos!

PIO. He—

SATURIO. But who's in there?

CARLOS. That old rascal, Zaragueta. I locked him in. Here's the key. (*He hands it to SATURIO.*)

DOLORES. But, Carlos!—

INDALECIO. Why, Carlos, my boy! (*SATURIO has opened the door.*)

HERMOGENES *enters.*

SATURIO (*as HERMOGENES emerges*). Forgive us the mistake!

HERMOGENES (*He is soaked. He empties the water from his hat*). This is a dastardly trick. (*Shivering with cold.*) Pay me my 3,000 pesetas!

INDALECIO. What?

DOLORES. Eh?

CARLOS. Yes, uncle. This man is not the man you think. He came here solely because I owe him that much money.

INDALECIO (*to CARLOS*). Three thousand pesetas for a doctor bill! (*In a loud voice to ZARAGUETA.*) Three thousand pesetas?

HERMOGENES. Yes, Senor, three thousand, three thousand.

SATURIO (*to INDALECIO*). A fine fat fee.

INDALECIO. It's robbery!

HERMOGENES. Pay the money or I'll drag him into court.

INDALECIO. This poor boy in court? Here, take your money—and much good may it do you. (*He hands over the bills.*)

HERMOGENES (*taking out the promissory notes*). Here are the notes—

CARLOS (*snatching them*). Let me see them. (*Tear-*

ing them.) Mere scraps of paper! (*He drops the pieces into the bucket.*)

HERMOGENES. That settles that. Goodbye. (*He hurries out through the garden door.*)

INDALECIO. Goodbye—and bad luck to you! He didn't hear me. (*He runs to the door to shout after him.*) Goodbye, and bad luck to you!

SATURIO. Three thousand pesetas for a doctor's fee! That's the way the Madrid doctors get rich.

CARLOS. See, uncle; see, aunt. I'm better already. My illness was entirely due to—that—doctor! (*He embraces them.*)

DOLORES. We'll send you to Paris anyway.

CARLOS. No, I'm going to stay here. I'll go to Paris with Maruja—on our honeymoon.

INDALECIO and DOLORES (*delighted*). What's that you're saying?

CARLOS. If she consents—

MARUJA (*pointedly*). I'll answer you when you prove to me that you are entirely cured of this ailment.

INDALECIO. Just listen to her!

PIO. Oh, what a weight has been lifted from me! I'll tell my mother that you two are going to get married; and so I'm free.

CARLOS. But you'll perform the ceremony, won't you?

PIO. With great pleasure.

DOLORES. My head is still going round! What a trick that Doctor Zaragueta played on us!

INDALECIO. And we even invited him to stay to dinner. To make it even, I'll eat his share. Let's have the table set.

CURTAIN.

The Wild Oats Boy

BY

LILLIAN MORTIMER

COMEDY-DRAMA in 3 acts; 7 men, 6 women. Time, 2¼ hours. Scene: 1 interior.

CHARACTERS

(As they appear in the play)

Aunt Anne.....Housekeeper in Uncle George's home
Della The maid
Judy.....Uncle George's adopted daughter
Danny Murphy.....The cook—maybe
Patricia Gilden (Pat).....Judy's friend
Eve Martin.....Another friend—more or less
Eddie.....The wild oats boy
Jake Peters.....The cousin from New York
Prue The country cousin
Charlie Benton (Chuck).....The ex-prize fighter cousin
Trout Prue's pestiferous son
Seth.....The uncle from Maine
Mose.....Uncle George's darky servant

How would you like to earn a fortune by going to bed at eight o'clock every night for three months? Such is Eddie's chore, according to the terms of his adopted father's freak will, and for a fast-stepping night-bird like Eddie, who frequently neglects to go to bed at all, it is some chore! He undertakes it, however, in the presence of all the family relatives, who are to benefit by the will in case he falls down on the job. He is also supposed to marry his sweetheart Judy, who is to inherit the fortune with him, but she has quarreled with him on account of his dissipated habits and he is having a hard time winning her back. Naturally the scheming relatives do what they can to keep the lovers apart and particularly to spoil Eddie's in-bed-at-eight-o'clock record. But in the end, the wild oats boy outwits them all. It is a merry, fast-moving plot, full of dramatic complications growing out of two unexpected masquerades, and at the final curtain springs a surprise that is a winner. Cast includes an Irish female impersonation part that will keep the audience in a roar. Other first-class comedy rôles: a crafty city slicker, a hick widow, her nitwit son, a slangy ex-prize fighter, a typical old-time "b'gosh" farmer, and two flirtatious flappers.

Price, 35 Cents

T. S. Denison & Company, Publishers

623 South Wabash Avenue

CHICAGO

The Clay's the Thing

BY
TOM TAGGART

FARCE in 3 acts; 6 men, 5 women. Time, 2½ hours.
Scenes: 2 interiors.

CHARACTERS

(As they appear in the play)

Jack Norman.....	A college student
Luke Calloway.....	His friend
Jerry Taylor.....	Jack's roommate
Dudley Briggs.....	Jack's uncle
Millie.....	The Briggs' maid
Mary Norman.....	Jack's sister
Jessie Stewart.....	Her friend
Sarah Briggs.....	Dudley's wife
Clayton Farmer (Clay).....	A poetic capitalist
Julia Farmer.....	His wife
Thomas Deems.....	A theatrical magnate

Jack and Luke, two happy-go-lucky college youths, conceive the brilliant idea of dressing up their chum Jerry as a woman and entering him into a national beauty contest, not only to win the prize money but to launch the sale of a beauty clay which Jack has concocted. So Jerry, who is clever at female impersonation, enters upon a wild and perilous career as a professional beauty and, posing as Luke's sister, soon has the trio in hot water up to their ears. Descending upon the summer home of Jack's uncle, a manufacturer of cosmetics to whom Jack hopes to sell his beauty clay, the boys stumble into an impromptu house party that turns out to be a wasps' nest. They meet a theatrical magnate who promptly falls in love with the masquerading Jerry, whereas that harassed youth has lost his heart to Jack's sister, who is impersonating a maid. The ridiculous tangle is eventually straightened out, but not until the audience have laughed themselves sick over the absurd situations and wise-cracking speeches. Other good rôles are a poetic and henpecked capitalist, his snobbish wife, a forlorn maid, and a lisping ingénue.

Price, 35 Cents

T. S. Denison & Company, Publishers

623 South Wabash Avenue

CHICAGO

Happy Valley

BY

LILLIAN MORTIMER

COMEDY-DRAMA in 4 acts; 4 men, 4 women. Time, 2 hours. Scenes: 1 interior, 1 exterior.

CHARACTERS

(As they appear in the play)

Polly Camp.....The girl who made a mistake
Pete.....The East Side boy
Jim Camp.....The crooked one
Charlie Burt.....The boy who was sorry
Rose Steel.....The girl who was saved
Harry Steel.....The country boy
Malinda Steel.....The suspicious one
Sara.....Who couldn't be driven

What to do with an incorrigibly wayward husband has worried many a young wife half distracted, and Polly Camp finds the problem hopeless. After patient efforts to turn her gangster husband from his crooked ways, she secretly leaves him, taking with her the innocent little country girl he has planned to lure into his gang, and the two escape to Happy Valley, the girl's home. Here the master of Happy Valley all unknowingly falls in love with Polly and has only heart-ache to console him when the detested husband appears on the scene. Luckily this "bad egg" meets a violent end at the hands of the federal authorities, and the lovers are free to find happiness in each other. A straightforward, heart-gripping tale, with plenty of laughs to offset the tears. Besides the principals, cast includes a vinegary and domineering old spinster, a gawky and independent hired girl, a scared youth who is the gangster's unwilling tool, and a comical East Side lad with a Bowery accent.

Price, 35 Cents

T. S. Denison & Company, Publishers

623 South Wabash Avenue

CHICAGO

The Gate to Happiness

BY
LILLIAN MORTIMER

COMEDY-DRAMA in 3 acts; 5 men, 5 women. Time,
2¼ hours. Scene: 1 interior.

CHARACTERS

(As they appear in the play)

Jack Gay.....	Eden's younger brother
Jenny Gay.....	Eden's lame sister
Mrs. Blair.....	The minister's wife
Aunt Sara Gay.....	Who has shootin' pains
Eden Gay.....	The dancer Carlotta
Oscar Gay.....	Eden's father
Rev. Blair.....	The minister
Stephen Blair.....	His son
Rex Curtis.....	Eden's New York admirer
Bunny Gay.....	Jack's bride

Eden Gay, a professional dancer known as Carlotta, who supports her entire family, including a drunken father, returns to her native village to find that, in deference to small-town prejudices, her family have circulated the fiction that she teaches school in New York. In the character of schoolma'am, she meets the son of the village minister, and they fall in love. But the young man's parents, discovering her identity, urge her not to ruin his impending ministerial career, and at their instigation she renounces him and proclaims her engagement to a high-stepping Broadway admirer. The renunciation, however, only complicates matters worse than before. In the end, true love overcomes all obstacles, and the self-sacrificing little dancer wins her reward. A charming play, rich in all those qualities that make an audience laugh and cry and sympathize. Cast includes: Eden's pathetically crippled sister; her calamity-howling aunt, a capital comedy rôle; her bibulous father; her irresponsible young brother; and his hard-boiled flapper bride.

Price, 35 Cents

T. S. Denison & Company, Publishers

623 South Wabash Avenue

CHICAGO

The Eighteen-Carat Boob

BY
LILLIAN MORTIMER

COMEDY-DRAMA in 3 acts; 6 men, 6 women.
Time, 2¼ hours. Scene: 1 interior.

CHARACTERS

(As they appear in the play)

Daisy Bell.....Who sponsors Bud
Alice Bisnette.....Hostess of the house party
Cora.....The Bisnettes' colored housekeeper
Charles.....Her husband, the chauffeur
Billy Kerns.....A high school student
Kitty Darling.....Alice's friend
Bella Sparks.....Another friend
Harry Carter (Bud).....
.....The country cousin from Maine (?)
Lynne Bisnette.....Alice's father
Raymond Barkville..The mysterious, unwelcome suitor
Anna.....The equally mysterious maid
Jack Merry.....Alice's choice

Alice Bisnette's gay summer house party is invaded by a raw and gawky young hick—a country cousin of one of the guests. His coming creates excitement and much merriment in a household already enjoying thrills and gooseflesh over the fact that a daring society jewel thief, known as the Crow, is at large. Almost every young man in the vicinity falls under suspicion, notably a detective masquerading as a suitor to Alice, also a mysterious young writer who has won Alice's heart. Even Bud, the boobish country cousin, gets mixed up in the mystery, clowning hilariously when among the girls and, behind their backs, plotting with the detective and his accomplice, the new maid, to capture and arrest Alice's sweetheart as the Crow. After foiling an elopement of the lovers, the plotters accomplish their end, only to find that their captive is not the Crow. A capital comedy of surprises, overflowing with laughter and containing a female impersonation that brings down the house. The well-diversified cast includes several giddy flappers, a pair of quarreling kid lovers, and a lovable darky housekeeper.

Price, 35 Cents

T. S. Denison & Company, Publishers

623 South Wabash Avenue

CHICAGO

PB-56071

11
12
13



207
35

Denison Select Plays

Quality Productions



THE list of Denison's plays is rich in just the of full-evening dramatic entertainment for which groups of players are seeking; sure-fire comedy-drama practically all with American themes and settings, the being simple and inexpensive. Also stage business is indicated in such detail that dramatic groups can produce the plays successfully without the aid of a professional coach. Written by playwrights experienced in practical stagecraft, these plays are unrivalled in the success with which they may be produced.



T.S. DENISON & COMPANY
623 S. Wabash Ave. CHICAGO